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SELECTED TRANSLATIONS ON NORTH VIETNAM

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## FOREWORD

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PREFACE

This series of reports contains translations from Vietnamese-language publications. Subjects included in each issue will vary according to material available at time of publication.

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## I. SOCIOLOGICAL

### A FEW OPINIONS ON ARTISTIC CRITICISM

[Following is a translation of an article written by Bao Dinh Giang and Dong Hoa1 in Nghien Cuu Van Hoc (Literary Research), No. 11, November 1960, Hanoi, pages 1-9.]

The criticism of literature and art has, for a long time, been considered and emphasized in many of the documents and opinions issued by the Central Committee and by many comrades and leaders of the Party.

It was clearly noted in the letter of the Central Executive Committee of the Party to the Second National Conference on Literature and Art that "Another important subject is the elucidation of sane criticism. Sane criticism always has strong effect on the development of literature and art."

Comrade Truong Chinh said in his lecture given at the Second National Conference on Literature and Art that "There is a need to undertake a movement of sane criticism within the consideration of the principles of serving the Homeland, the people, and the popular democratic regime, and in a sincere and creative spirit. We must be decisive in eliminating criticism of a false and destructive nature or of a brutal and oppressive nature. It is necessary to elucidate the freedom of thought to encourage the discussion of antagonistic opinions among the people."

The Central Committee and the comrades and leaders of the Party have shown us the serious objectives, duties, the position, the standpoint, the attitude, and procedure in the task of criticizing literature and art in accordance with the basic principles of Marxist-Leninist doctrine on literature and art.

Many worthy achievements have been attained in the work of criticizing literature and art during the last few years. The struggle against the reexamination of the Nhanvan-Giai Pham (Humanistes-Masterpieces) has been victorious. Since then, and up to the present time, the mission of criticizing literature and art has advanced another step. The number of critics, as well as the number of readers of the critics' works, have shown an evident increase in comparison with the

first few years after the return of peace. A number of new critics have progressively been introduced to the readers, and many former critics have come back to the active movement of criticizing literature and art. The criticism movement has acquired new impetus due to several open discussions of the poem "Tu Ay" ["From There"] by To Huu, the novel "Cai San Gach" ["The Paved Yard"] by Dao Vu, and the play "Mot Dang Vien" ["A Member of the Party"] by Hoc Phi, together with several exchanges of opinions on works of literature and art during the meetings of literature and art clubs. Something special is coming from the critics who have the task of criticizing literature and art, and criticism is also appearing in the opinions of the leaders of the Party, the workers, the peasants, and the soldiers, and in magazines and during different conversations.

The task of criticism has also shown more vitality in the newspapers and in the magazines, Van Nghe [Literature and Art], Van Hoc [Literature], and Van Nghe Quan Doi [Literature and Art in the Army], since the beginning of 1959. The task of criticising literature and art has also received full consideration in political, social, daily news, weekly, and monthly magazines. The creation of the Institute of Literature and the publication of the review, Literary Research have also contributed to the development of the movement for the criticism of literature and art.

All of the above-mentioned developments have contributed to the new vigor of the movement for artistic criticism, and it is becoming more exciting and promising. However, our movement to criticize literature and art still has its weak points and defects and these weak points and defects have been a serious obstacle in the advancement of the movement. To give impetus to the artistic criticism movement, we believe these weak points and defects should be mentioned in order to conceive the most suitable plan and method for their resolution.

First of all, we must mention the tendency to excessively high artistic goal and an excessively low political goal, which is in conflict with the conception of artistic criticism of the Party. The Party greatly appreciates an artistic goal, but never neglects the fact that politics is the first goal in any circumstance.

We believe this problem should continuously receive reasonable consideration. The reason is, like in other domains of revolutionary activity (politics, economics, culture, etc.), in the domain of artistic criticism, in the present time as well as in the past, the deadly dispute is still going on between two rival conceptions, the proletarian and the capitalistic. This dispute moves back and forth, and

appears under different forms. Sometimes it is hidden, and at other times it becomes an open dispute, sometimes it is subtle, and sometimes it is decisive. We should not neglect the principle in regard to those disputes between artistic conceptions. We must stick to the two above-mentioned basic conceptions of artistic criticism. However, among the people, the understanding of art can only be attained by free discussion to use arguments to master arguments and to advance thoughts to contend with thoughts; and we cannot use the majority to dominate the minority, because truth cannot be discovered in science nor in art by just the majority.

In our present artistic criticism movement, there is a bad tendency to fear tension, offense, and loss of dignity. This leads to a secured and reserved front which withdraws in the face of a bad reaction of some criticized party and then comes to a point where no efforts are made, even for the necessary and constructive expressions of ideas for the sake of truth.

Like in other fighting tasks a courageous struggle and a enthusiastic revolutionary mind should be solidly maintained. Our pens, our brains, and our hearts must be trained to eliminate the enemy of the proletarian conception of art at any time and under any form. We believe that the apparition of the secure tendency in artistic criticism, like the reserved attitude or the withdrawal in the face of any attack, manifests the rightist attitude which eliminates the fighting spirit, and is not advantageous and must be discarded from any activity of our sane criticism.

In the task of artistic criticism, like in any other revolutionary task, a correct political attitude and a good artistic conception can easily result in a mistake without the existence of a suitable method of thinking. It is commonly known that literature and art represent an aspect of social consciousness which reflects the objective reality of the evolution of dialectic development. We also know that the characteristic of creative arts is imaginative reflection. A good criticism of an artistic work demands the observations of the critical author in order to meet the requirements of the objective reality and thus discover the living truths. On the other hand, the laws of artistic creation and the analysis of concrete and living artistic metaphors must be adopted and compared to objective truths in order to discover the social substance and the artistic value of the masterpiece.

In our artistic criticism movement, there is also the situation which has not issued from objective realities (social life, masterpieces, authors) but from subjective deduction which stubbornly identifies itself as the very core of

the truth. This is the reason why we have come across the unilateral, tendentious, simple (simple-minded), and elementary critics.

Some critics only point out defects, rather than qualities. In some cases, sarcasm which is directed toward the work of the artistically immature is of such a nature that it serves only to frighten young writers. We rarely find in such critics the benevolent, stimulating and constructive style which meets the conception of artistic criticism of the Party, but we only find cantankerous expressions which lack equity and generosity.

Some critics, however, are used to tendentiously emphasizing the spiritual content and neglecting the artistic form. Those critics have been too lenient with themselves in exposing and in praising the "opportunist tasks" which, in fact, only consist of immature works delivered, after swallowing a crude handful of documents and methods. Of course, according to our conception, we have to elevate and encourage opportune tasks; but we do not praise works which clumsily and flatly develop methodology. This tendency has led to the toleration of elementary and vitally poor works which completely lack educational value.

Another tendency of these critics is to praise only because of personal sympathy. They sometimes even miss the defects in principles. With these critics, the readers might think that artistic criticism is only a matter of convenience or of personal taste, without any consideration for the principles, the attitudes, and the conceptions of society.

The above-mentioned types of criticism are only the products of subjective, tendentious and unilateral methods of thinking. They lead to the elementary, the simple and the inflexible, and cannot seriously reflect the objective truth. These tendencies have been quite an obstacle to the development of the artistic criticism movement, and therefore they are useless in the creative movement.

The above-mentioned subjective and unilateral tendencies reveal critics with errors, eagerness, irritation, and superiority attitudes. This very odd critical attitude has allowed the redressing of the wrong ideas and attitudes of a number of criticized parties. We believe that the criticized parties would acknowledge their full appreciation of their ideas if the critics would have a sincere and constructive attitude on the basis of mutual aid between comrades. We must, at the same time, give respect and consideration to laborious and creative works of other people. We must not even eagerly disregard immature works.

From another point of view, according to the conception

of the Party, it is commonly known that literature and art must be the work of all people. It is the same with the task of artistic criticism. With regard to those who create art, their works are published to serve the revolution and the people. The people have the right to praise or to disapprove of any art work which causes damage to them and to the revolution. It is the responsibility of writers and artists to acknowledge criticism of their work regardless of its source. There is no excuse for bad reactions of authors against the criticism of the public and the readers. Naturally, it is important to see that not all of the critical opinions of the public or the readers is entirely correct. This is why the acknowledgement of the critical opinions of the people does not mean following them blindly but rather studying and analyzing them calmly in order to choose the valuable ideas which will contribute to our improvement. Sometimes it is necessary to discuss and to exchange ideas with the critics to clarify the subject. In art, any attitude which rejects criticism is bad and in conflict with the conception of art in our Party.

In the artistic criticism movement during the past year, in quite a few cases the attitudes of those who have been criticized have not conformed with this spirit. Some artists have the erroneous idea that the critics are examining them and looking for faults. Some authors even attack and despise the critics, saying: "It is easy to talk, but difficult to act." "Don't criticize if you don't create." "What does he know about the subject that he can criticize?" It is certain that none of us readers can approve of this haughty attitude of "standing above the people" which these authors have. They do not yet realize that the goal of being criticized and the goal of criticising are both meant to serve the revolution and nothing else. They cannot realize that everyone can criticize according to his own degree of knowledge even though he may not create.

Some authors refuse to recognize astute criticism and respond only to erroneous opinions given by their superficial critics; and then they concentrate their counter-attack on those poor critics in order to avoid the implications of really astute criticism.

In summary, in the task of artistic criticism today, there is a bad reaction between the artist and the critic, a lack of creative integrity, superficiality, clanishness, poor individual preconceptions, and gratuitous condemnation causing a lack of solidarity. At the same time, in a few concrete subjects, some ideas which are completely in conflict with our conceptions are passed over and are not confronted



with adequate dialectics in order to discover the truth. The above attitudes of poor criticism and the reactions to such have engendered a lack of adequate communication between the artist and his critics and have hindered the valuable potential relationship which should be based upon the relationships between comrades.

In order to forcefully encourage the artistic criticism movement, we cannot afford to ignore the solution of this conflict by not raising the level of politics, thought, techniques and experiences of the critics as well as the artists in order to promote solidarity. On the other hand, it is necessary to control the deviate and bad attitudes of the critics and the artists. We think that the essential way to solve the conflict between criticism and creation is to see that both parties possess the attitude of both critic and artist according to the serious conceptions of the Party. For without a serious attitude of both critic and artist, there will be rifts between the arts, politics, techniques, and life, and perhaps even opposition; and, therefore, the conflict between criticism and creation may suddenly become acute and create severe repercussions. At the same time, this would be a convenient opportunity for our enemies to sabotage our work; and this may also bring about a lack of solidarity.

In our present artistic criticism, we still see manifestations of careless and superficial criticisms. There are even instances where artistic works are praised or condemned after only a superficial reading. Experience has told us that without a thorough study, without deep thought, and without pro and con consideration of the problems before any criticisms are made, it is difficult to avoid mere rush decisions and irresponsible praise or condemnation. For more than a year, another weak point in the artistic criticism movement has been the weakness of the cadre-critics in basic Marxist-Leninist dialectics as related to art. Their level of technical knowledge is generally still limited as related to the revolutionary task which is now before us.

Without dialectics, politics, and techniques, the critics will easily confuse phenomena and the essence of the criticized subject. Conversely, without the necessary knowledge of the truth, the critics will not have the criteria to evaluate the degree of reality reflected by a work and by the artist. For example, to criticize an artistic work on agricultural cooperatives, socialized industry, or military life, without thorough understanding of the psychological importance of the feelings of the workers, peasants, and soldiers in the evolution of their struggle and production, it will not be possible to have effective criteria for deep criticism

and analysis. Because of the limited scope of the artistic criticism movement, the majority of the critics have done no more than just begin, with the exception of a few who have contributed something of value. Our critics have not succeeded in thoroughly analyzing the social nature and the artistic level of the work. As to the leadership, no concrete plan covering creative activity has yet evolved, and no plan has been made to create cadre-critics. Up to the present time, a group of professional critics has not yet taken shape. We feel that this weak point can be overcome with time, but first of all it is necessary to rapidly overcome some important defects in order to satisfy the needs of the artistic criticism movement at the present time.

Today, in the organization of the artistic criticism movement, there is a tendency to solve the conflicts between the three sources of criticism, the artists, the cadres of different levels and different branches (including even the leading cadres), and the people.

Some authors believe their works only need the support of the leaders and of the people. This belief leads them to the point where they are indifferent to the views of the critics and especially to the condemnation received from the artists, for they always think that the artist is indifferent to any work but his own and lacks equity and objectivity. Some authors think that the opinions of the people are unimportant and that the political cadres are not able to understand the characteristics and techniques which are manifested in artistic creation. This is why the criticism of the people, workers, peasants, and soldiers does not receive high consideration, and why the political cadres are thought of as trying to challenge the authors and to preach on the arts in a very mechanical way.

In the organization and leadership of criticism, we must firmly eliminate the tendencies which are emanating from the three sources of artistic criticism.

We have already realized that our revolutionary arts are here to serve the people. Only a close relationship with the life of the people can bring vitality to the arts. It is the same with artistic criticism. Leaving out the critical role of the people would place many limitations on the task of artistic criticism. We cannot afford to not give serious consideration to the role of the people as participants in artistic criticism. The people participating in artistic criticism include the common people and the cadres of different levels and different branches.

Of course, in artistic criticism, the very core is still the artist and especially his critics, because there is a

fund of knowledge in them which brings about intelligent discussion and the practice of the arts as well as the dialectics and the practice of revolution.

However, we cannot afford to not respect the penetrating knowledge of the workers, peasants, and soldiers concerning real life as a contribution to the task of artistic criticism. They are the most directly concerned with social life, and most directly participated in the struggle and in production. This is why they are also the best inspectors for the level reflecting reality in the work of art. In judging the acuity of the writer in respect to the psychology of the workers, the peasants and the soldiers, nobody is so well equipped as the peasants, the soldiers, and the workers themselves.

We cannot afford to not give a high value to the critical opinions of the leading cadres and of the cadre group as a whole. They are the ones who have been participating in the class struggle and who have been tested in the struggle for a sharp political awareness which allows them to distinguish right from wrong and the wheat from the chaff for the people and for the revolution.

These three groups possess unevenly distributed knowledge. Some are proficient in one area and some in another. The backgrounds of the knowledge of these groups have their own important characteristics. Knowing how to utilize these three sources will make it possible to draw out valuable ideas which could not be contributed by any famous critic no matter who he is.

Through wide discussions of the poem "Tu Ay," the novel Cai San Gach, and the play "Mot Dang Vien", it is commonly agreed that only the development of wide criticism and the freedom of thought in criticism can illustrate many different strong and weak facets in an artistic work. From the experiences in the artistic criticism movement in the whole world, as well as in the Soviet Union and China, we acknowledge that the truth can be found in many artistic works only after extensive examination; and, moreover, some subjects can be understood only after a long time. The problem of freedom of thought in artistic criticism is still of special significance. Only the freedom of thought and the freedom of expression can create favorable conditions for research abilities and highly creative development in the interest of art for the revolution. At the present time, the relationship is not yet satisfactory between the artists and the critics, as well as between the critics themselves, and does not allow a satisfactory atmosphere of criticism. We must be firm in mastering this situation in order to secure freedom of expression and freedom of thought in

artistic criticism. Naturally, freedom of thought in artistic criticism, as well as the development of the criticism movement, does not aim at the entire body of opinions.

In order to assure that the studies lead to good results in wide discussions of each artistic work, the opinions must be studied and analyzed in order to arrive at the necessary conclusions to acknowledge the subjects already understood, the subjects that need further discussion, and the subjects that should be shelved because of the lack of suitable conditions for an immediate resolution.

To develop the artistic criticism movement does not mean that it should be confined to a certain number of disciplines or aspects, but it must be universal. Our present task of artistic criticism is still defective because of its limited character which only attends to the study of literature (although still inadequate). In other aspects of art, like the theater, photography--especially artistic photography, and music, this task has not been extensively performed, and in some of them it is still very superficial.

We still lightly consider the criticism of the popular arts movement in industry, public places, the countryside, and the military. There must be sharp criticism of every popular form of the artistic movement in every region.

Our task of artistic criticism has not as yet included the artistic movement for children, for the ethnic minorities, for women, and especially for the introduction of young writers. The nourishment and encouragement of young writers must be thoroughly investigated. They are an essential force for the socialist art of the future. In the task of artistic criticism we must be firm in reacting against any manifestations of mental intimidation which might impede them and prevent their advancement. At the same time, we must not agree to the false manifestation which makes them haughty and complacent, and which would be unfavorable to their development.

Our task of artistic criticism has not as yet attempted to systematically follow the development of the present reactionary art movement in the Diem [American] regime in the South in order to expose its basic character to our people. Also, we have not yet paid attention to the documentation, research, and expression of the advancing patriotic art of the people in the South who are struggling every minute and every hour against the hindrance of progress by our opponents. Recently a number of our articles in the review, Van Hoc Thong Nhat (Literary Unity), lay bare the reactionary attitudes in the letters of the so-called "Nhom Dan Chung" [A group of people] from Saigon to the artists in the North. These were like the ones we put out on criticism of the poems,

Tieng Hat Mien Nam [Songs from the South], created by our people in the South. However, this task is still too limited and needs to be pushed forward and publicized.

Looking back at the task of artistic criticism, after the struggle against the destructive Nhan Van - Giai Pham group and up to the present time, we can say that our present artistic criticism movement has advanced a definite and noticeable step forward in comparison with a few years ago.

Today, we are fully conscious of the demands of the revolutionary duties of the present period and the demands for development which are daily expanding. In the art movement, generally speaking, and in the artistic criticism movement in particular, the above-mentioned defects and weaknesses are only the difficulties that have been encountered in the process of development.

To master these weak points and defects, we will enthusiastically and continuously struggle to elevate our level of knowledge of Marxist-Leninist doctrine, artistic dialectics, techniques, culture, and life, and will put forth effort for the improvement of political attitudes, artistic conception, methodology, attitudes, and serious attitudes and criticisms according to the concepts of the Party.

With the leadership and the special attention of the Party in the art movement, it is certain that we will progress and create a professional school of artistic criticism of high quality, and develop a sane, wide spread artistic criticism movement with high standards to insure a continuously advancing art movement.

CONGRESS FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF  
THE NATIONAL LANGUAGE

[Following is the translation of an unsigned article in Ngien Cuu Van Hoc (Literary Research), No. 11, November 1960, Hanoi, pages 97-100.]

The Congress for the Improvement of the National Language, organized by the Institute of Literature (of the State Scientific Committee), was held at Hanoi at the end of September and the beginning of October 1960. Sixty-seven members participated in the Congress, including a number of scientific researchers in various fields of the social sciences and natural sciences, cadre linguists, cadres teaching at different universities, a number of representatives of literature, education, the press, and publishing, and some individuals who are very interested in the national language. The Congress met during the four days of 21, 28, 30 September and 7 October 1960. The comrade vice directors of the governmental scientific committee, Bui Cong Trung and Ta Quang Buu, the director of the Institute of Literature, Dang Thai Mai, and comrade Pham Huy Thong, director of the School of Education, presided over the various sessions.

The Congress began on the morning of 21 September. Comrade Dang Thai Mai pointed out in his opening speech that the improvement of the national language has attracted the attention of many people in different fields because of its importance for our linguistics, and therefore for the development of literature and science, in our country. But it is a tremendous and complicated subject, both scientifically and politically. This Congress was only the first step to define the subject, and was aimed at discussions of principles for the improvement of the national language. At the same time, the Congress took the first step toward the exchange of ideas on the concrete drawing up of a project for the improvement of the national language.

On the first day of the Congress, Comrade Hoang Phe, secretary of the linguistics division of the Institute of Literature, presented a report of the Institute of Literature entitled "On the National Language." The report had five

chapters: 1. History of the National Language, 2. Characteristics of the National Language, 3. Reform (or improvement) of the National Language after Several Previous Discussions, 4. Toward a Logical Solution for the National Language, and 5. Drawing Up of a Project for the First Improvement of the National Language.

There were 23 interventions during the session of the Congress from Comrades Nguyen Kim Than, Hoang Tue, Venerable Nguyen Cong Tieu, Nguyen Lan, Nguy Nhu Kontum, Hoang Xuan Nhi, Nguyen Van Tu, Dang Van Ngu, Tu Lam, Nguyen Quang Huong, Vu Can, Nguyen Hoan, Ca Van Thinh, Nguyen Trong Phan, Vu Van Viet, Nguyen Dinh, Van Lang, Hoang Tuy, Nong Ich Thuy, Pho Duc Thao, Tan Quang, Pham Huy Thong, and Hoang Phe. All of them agreed that it is necessary to improve the national language. The present national language presents several illogical points. The vital development of the Vietnamese language, as well as of education, literature, and science, in the North urgently requires the improvement of the national language. At the same time, the improvement of the national language will be a favorable condition for the creation of a written language for our ethnic minorities based upon the national language, and on the other hand, it will permit an annual saving of paper and printing work. Thus, the improvement of the national language is a requirement of our revolution. However, the situation of our country, which is divided in two parts at the present time, presents an obstacle to the improvement of the national language. Therefore we must give full consideration to the political situation of our country in order to find a satisfactory solution to this problem. The Congress hoped that the patriots and linguists in South Vietnam would think about this problem and the intellectuals of the nation would exchange ideas and research for the resolution of this problem of the national language.

Principles for the improvement of the national language were discussed and basic precepts were approved by the Congress and published in the report of the Institute of Literature. These included: (1) Based upon the present national language, the unnecessary confused items are to be avoided. (2) Drastic but prudent and certain modifications must be made for the improvement of the national language. (3) Carried out step-by-step, the former must be a good preparation for the latter. (4) A more logical, simple and complete language is required.

The suggestions in the discussions have brought out several ideas which have made the above-mentioned precepts clearer, especially the idea of the "step-by-step procedure" and the idea of being "logical and at the same time simple." A few complementary important opinions were presented:

modifications for the improvement of the national language should closely account for the development of contemporary Vietnamese, and furthermore the characteristics of our language must be respected and the positive elements of foreign languages must be adopted for their value. Some members did not entirely approve of all the points of the report, and they proposed research work to carry out a relatively drastic modification of the national language aimed at conciseness and, consequently, without being based upon the former national language. Some of them proposed an immediate instead gradual improvement.

The Congress also approved the basic foundation of the principles for the improvement of the national language. The Institute of Literature reported them as: (1) The national language must meet with the characteristics of contemporary Vietnamese. (2) The principles of the basic spelling of the national language must be only the principles of intonation. To improve the national language precisely, there must be direct application of the principles of intonation, although in some definite cases the usual spelling is still practiced when it is not too illogical. (3) It is suggested that we adopt the pronunciation in the capital city of Hanoi as the criteria for the pronunciation of Vietnamese, and complete it by other sounds which are not well differentiated in Hanoi but are clearly distinguished in more than half of the country (and the national written language must always account for the difference of ch and tr, x and s, and d/gi and r). (4) It is preferable to adopt Roman letters for the logical system of capital letters (study the use of the additional letters f, j, z, and w,). (5) At the same time, it is worthwhile to decide upon the use of a number of new syllables to facilitate the phonetic translation and the phonetic transcription of foreign languages. The use of new syllables must be restricted to only those that are necessary; and it is important to consider the system of intonation of Vietnamese and the system of the national language. (6) It is important to study the use of the combination of words, and therefore to fix the rule for the use of the hyphen.

The following problems have been mentioned in many interventions: (1) Concerning the problem of the principles of basic spelling of the national language, some persons have proposed the application of the principles of etymology besides those of intonation (for example, to write the consonant d/gi and the scientific symbols). (2) Concerning the problem of the correct pronunciation of Vietnamese; some have proposed that we conform to the present national language in order to choose the pronunciation with net distinction. It could even



be from a majority or from a minority or from a small region (as a concrete example, it is better to adopt the distinction in the pronunciation of d and gi like in central Vietnam.). (3) Concerning the problem of the system of capital letters, some proposed to study the use of new symbols, and some others brought up the problem of the elimination of secondary accents, mainly the intonation accent. (4) Concerning the problem of the adoption of new syllables, some proposed prudence and others proposed strong action; and it was advised that we do not use consonants to construct syllables. (5) Concerning the problem of writing combinations, the principle was generally agreed to as to its logic and its convenience; but it happens to be a very complex problem which requires continuous research.

There were discussions about the drawing up of the first step for the improvement of the national language as presented by the Institute of Literature. A few propositions for the improvement have been approved: The use of f in the place of ph; the use of d in the place of đ; the use of l in the place of y (except in uy, to which many did not agree, and wi, as mentioned in the project which proposed the temporary use of the old system; and a few propositions defended the use of ay and ây and did not agree with the use of âi and âi as presented in the project); the elimination of h in gh and ngh; the use of a unique letter for c, k, or q (but the use of c or k is not yet generally agreed upon); the use of some groups of consonants as the initial consonants (like bra, cla, etc.).

A few other problems were raised in very lively discussions, but were not solved. The most exciting discussion was concerning the problem of writing the consonant d/gi. Some agreed to use a unique letter (concrete, like z) for d/gi as presented in the project of the Institute of Literature. To the contrary, others defended the differentiation (eg., use z or dz for d and j or ji for gi). Furthermore, a few entirely agreed upon the use of w for the semi-vowel "u" when it is used as an initial and to replace o and u (for example, replace oa, oe, ue and uy by wa, we, we and wi). But many people did not agree on the use of w because there was nothing definite about semi-consonants in the Vietnamese language.

In the final session in the afternoon of 7 October, the Congress acknowledged the general conclusion of Comrade Bui Cong Trung. After quoting the final ideas of the Congress Comrade Bui Cong Trung clearly declared: "This Congress, which began the discussion of the improvement of the national language, has been a success. We have all agreed on fundamental points. The ideas presented during the Congress must be continuously studied; either they were from a majority or

from the minority, and in general we should not draw any conclusion yet. "Comrade Bui Cong Trung proposed the creation of a research committee for the improvement of the national language, to carry on the research on the problem, to organize broad discussions, and to consider various ideas from several people. An urgent program is required to find a definite project for the improvement after a certain period of time, and this project must be presented to the government by the Public Scientific Committee.

The Congress nominated a research committee for the improvement of the national language which included seven members. They were Comrades Dang Thai Mai, director of the Institute of Literature, Pham Huy Thong, director of the Advanced School of Pedagogy, Nguy Nhu Kontum, director of the Advanced School of Synthesis, Nguyen Quang Huong, an engineer Nguyen Kim Than, for linguistics in the Advanced School of Synthesis, Hoang Tue, for linguistics in the Advanced School of Pedagogy, and Hoang Phe, secretary of linguistics in the Institute of Literature.

A FEW OPINIONS ON PROFESSIONAL TRAINING FOR  
THE IMPROVEMENT OF ART

[Following is a translation of an article by  
Hong Cuong in Van Hoc (Literature), No. 122,  
Hanoi, 25 November 1960, page 3.]

In the letter of the Second National Congress of the Arts, the Central Committee of the Labor Party of Vietnam made this appeal: "The artists must make an effort to improve the arts." It was clearly stated in the decision of the Central Party Office on the improvement of the arts for the year 1959 and 1960 that, "The nourishment of the arts should include four aspects: (1) education in politics and thinking, (2) identification with life and the people, (3) the raising of the level of civilization and knowledge, and (4) the orientation of the artists in the Marxist-Leninist spirit to improve the arts.

Our conception of the nourishment of art mainly consists of the political education and the identification with life, but at the same time we must emphasize professional training for the improvement of art. This concept came about through the important relationship between thought and art. The ideological character and the artistic character are the two goals of the artist's work. To give value to a work, the ideological goal should come first, but this does not mean that the artistic goal should be neglected. It was emphasized in the letter of the Central Executive Committee of the Party to the Second National Congress of Arts that, "The value of a work is not only in its ideological content, but also in its artistic qualities." If a work has strong ideological content, and the execution is artistically immature, then its impact will not be very powerful. A work of art which is aesthetically inadequate is no longer "A work of art."

This concept also issues from the relationship between the ideological attitudes and the artistic profession. Without the ideological attitude of the working class, the artist cannot properly express his work. But an artistic deficiency can neither express nor create. The ideological attitude and the artistic profession cannot be separated. The ideological

attitude of the artist should be expressed in his work through his artistic profession. The artist must describe reality, not with abstract political thought, but with artistic images. The artist is not the one to use political ideas for argument, but the one who uses artistic images to express the emotions and spirit of humankind.

To compare this basic conception with the artistic professions in our country today, we realize that the artistic professional training for the improvement of the arts is very important. Our artists are of good quality and politically highly motivated and of broad artistic capacity, but do not have complete mastery which comes only with maturity. Not only are the level of consciousness concerning the meaning of socialism and the level of knowledge about the new way of life not highly enough developed, but the lack of a solid artistic background is also a handicap. At the present time, the number of our proficient artists is not very high. For a long time our artistic creations and expressions have not been very good. This is not because of a lack of political awareness or because of a lack of experience in living, but because of inadequate training in the profession. This is why concurrently with the political education and a greater experience of life we must emphasize the professional training and the improvement of art. It was clearly stated in the declaration of the Committee on the Development of Works of Art for the years 1959-1960 that, "On the foundation of continuous political studies and the vital relationship of the enrichment of thoughts and accumulated living experiences with life, we have to build our knowledge and to improve art."

Professional training and the improvement of art consist of many aspects. The following are the principle points: (1) The study of artistic reasoning, which includes the fundamental artistic reasoning of the Marxist-Leninist doctrine and experiences in the advanced arts of socialist countries and of the artistic direction of our Party.

The fundamental artistic reasoning of the Marxist-Leninist doctrine is the basic direction of our Party. Without the Marxist-Leninist artistic reasoning, the revolutionary artistic direction of our Party would not exist. To stay close to the artistic direction of our Party, we have to study its origin which appears to be the fundamental artistic reasoning of the Marxist-Leninist doctrine.

The experience in the advanced art of the Socialist countries, which consists of the Marxist-Leninist reasoning, has been put into practice and has been tested and found to be of high value. Our friendly allies have all progressed toward socialism before we have, and some, like the Soviet

Union, are ahead of us by some twenty or thirty years and have acquired a wealth of experience. Among our friendly allies who share with us the same ideals, China has a situation similar to ours. It will be necessary for us to carry on a constructive study; and, through working along the same lines, we must build a better artistic foundation.

The artistic direction of the Party is to apply the expanding nature of the Marxist-Leninist artistic reasoning and to apply the advanced and abundant artistic experiences of our allied friends to our situation. The artistic direction of our Party is the most suitable for the situation in Vietnam and for the Vietnamese people. This is why it is essential to study and practice the artistic direction of our Party.

The study and practice of the artistic reasoning is very important. Without revolutionary artistic reasoning, the revolutionary artistic movement would not exist. Without studying and practicing to acquire the Marxist-Leninist artistic reasoning and the revolutionary artistic direction of the Party, it would not be possible to avoid blind mistakes. It was emphasized in the political report of the Central Executive Committee of the Party, which was presented to the Third National Congress of the Party, that, "We must give special attention to the task of artistic reasoning."

To attain a deep and broad knowledge of the artistic reasoning it is necessary to correctly perform the following great tasks: translate and publish as much as possible on the fundamental artistic reasoning of the Marxist-Leninist doctrine and publish books on reasoning concerning the direction and experiences of the advanced artistic creation of socialistic countries; invite more specialists to come and help us to learn fine arts in the Marxist-Leninist spirit and the history of the art of our friendly allies, especially the Soviet Union and China; and publish as much as possible on the artistic direction of the Party and the speeches of President Ho and of other comrade leaders of the Party and the Government which are presented to our artists. These documents are the works on Marxist-Leninist artistic reasoning of Vietnam. Up to now Uncle (President Ho), and the Comrades in the Central Party have delivered quite a number of speeches to the artists. Our mistake was that we did not record all of the speeches in their entirety so that we could have extensive publications.

We must also encourage the Cadres to fulfill their artistic tasks and the artists to write more articles and books to explain the artistic direction of the Party and to give a summary of our artistic movement and the experiences

in their artistic activities. We must broadly organize the discussion of the arts so that artistic criticism becomes a daily interesting activity for our people. Discussion and criticism of art should lead to universal agreement, and not just agreement among the majority. After reaching universal agreement, when someone thinks it over and finds some different ideas, then we must welcome and consider them. In the discussion and criticism of art, we must absolutely develop freedom of thought and the consideration of everyone's ideas. This is the only way to bring about enlightenment in the arts.

(2) The study of the artistic background of our people and of the world's artistic background. To talk about the arts is to talk about people. Art seriously involves the characteristics of the people more than any other form of consciousness. All peoples have their own artistic form of expression and their own artistic tradition. This tradition takes form and evolves out of the past struggle against nature and also out of the class struggle. The valuable artistic vestiges of the people of the past still live today and will go on living for all time. Not only do these artistic vestiges illustrate the great and beautiful thoughts and feelings of our people, but they also express the aesthetic form of expression of our people. Our modern arts must be built on these traditional and beautiful foundations. It is not possible to build beautiful modern art in Vietnam without the knowledge of the artistic vestiges of the past.

Besides the beautiful traditional artistic heritage of our people, the arts also have another characteristic, contact and mutual influence. The artistic masterpiece of the advanced arts of the world, especially those of our friendly allies, not only possess majestic thoughts and feelings of humanity that our people must learn, but also include artistic qualities which are suitable for the goal that our arts must reach in order to serve the people, and are suitable to our people's emotional character and appreciation of beauty. It is impossible to ignore the possibilities of learning from the famous works of art of the world in order to give enlightenment to the modern works of art of our people. The organization of research and translation and the abundant and good introduction of the artistic background of our people and of the world are the best conditions to facilitate our training. We must make as many sources of information as possible, the more the better. But there are limitations in our possibilities of meeting the requirements, and especially we need adequate planning in the work of translation and the introduction of famous works of art. To better

introduce the advanced works of art to our people, the training of cadres for the translation of art works plays an important role.

The artistic heritage of our people and of the world are the valuable works. The reading of those works will nourish thoughts and feelings and will provide training facilities for the artistic profession. The elite of the artistic circles during the imperialistic and feudal periods could not hope for any support from the ruling class in the performance of the arts, but could rely only on themselves to have knowledge of our people and of the world in order to become proficient artists. The artistic organization must have a complete library of those valuable collections. The art school must include a reading program and studies of art collections besides the regular course work. But the most important thing still is the determination for self-instruction by the people who are performing the artistic tasks.

WE MUST SEEK A RATIONAL SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM  
OF THE WRITTEN LANGUAGE

[The following is a translation of an article  
by Hoang Phe from Nghien Cuu Van Hoc (Liter-  
ary Research), Hanoi, No 11, November 1960,  
pp 10-33.]

I. Improvement of the National Written Language Is  
An Urgent Need of the Present Time.

Modernization, or improvement, of the written language is a very great task which exerts an important influence on all of the activities of the people. This is why it must come as a decision of the government. This task is often of a revolutionary character, and therefore, only a revolutionary government can decisively promote the modernization of the written language.

It is commonly known that the written language is inadequate as compared with the living spoken language. This is because the written language is relatively rigid while the spoken language is continually developing, and phonetics are constantly being modified, although slowly. This is why after every historical period, the problem of improvement of the written language should be reconsidered, otherwise a chasm would exist between the written and the spoken language.\*

\*The modernization of the written language and the improvement of the written language are different problems according to our conception. The improvement of the written language is based upon the foundation of the existing written language, with some modification to improve it. As for the modernization of the written language, it consists of the realization of a larger modification, and the principal of modification is not based upon the present written language. Therefore, it can bring about a complete change from one written language to another. This is why up to now we are used to talking of the modernization of the national written language and we think it is more correct to talk of improvement of the national written language.



Language is never static and therefore a static written language is impossible. We have not taken into consideration the scientific development which day after day requires research for improvement of the written language.

But concerning the problem of improvement of the written language, the attitude of the capitalist regime and the attitude of the socialist regime differs. The written language of many capitalist countries (England, France, etc.) does not welcome any improvement because of the conservative policy of capitalism. "The origin of the conservative attitude of the ruling class in the capitalistic country toward the improvement of the language through better spelling, is intended to forbid the people access to the wide road of education. To prove this conservatism, we can quote the improvement of the English written language (and it only concerns partial improvement) which took place in the middle of the Eighteenth Century for the last time... The government of the Russian Czar was stubbornly against any experiments, even the smallest one, in order to simplify the Russian language" (from Soviet Polytechnic Encyclopedia, Chapter "Spelling".)

The French language also has not been improved since the end of the Seventeenth Century. This is why the contradictions grow to such a degree that in the French language of today there are 36 ways to write the sound "o", 52 ways to write the sound "ang", 50 ways to write the sound "e", and in the English language there are 658 different ways to write 40 sounds! (See Marcel Cohen La Grande Invention de l'Ecriture et son Evolution, Paris, 1958, page 276 and 291).

This is why it is not excessive to say that the difficulties in spelling is a "national calamity" for the English and French people (see J. Vendryes: Le language, Paris, 1950, page 389).

The problem of our national written language is far simpler than the problem of the English and French languages because it is a very young written language and has been in existence for only a little more than three centuries, but only definitely established for little more than one century. The national written language only has one principal of fundamental spelling, i.e., the principal of phonetics. The improvement of our written language is a problem which is not so complicated and difficult as the improvement of many other written language. Anyway, it is not surprising that during more than 80 years of domination the French government has not been able to solve this problem; the French government did not pay attention to the improvement of our national language, or when it felt obliged to give some

attention to this as in 1906, had shown its incapacity because of conservative opposition.

The socialist governments pay great attention to the problem of the improvement of the written language whenever it is necessary, in contrast to the capitalist governments. It is very striking to mark that one of the very first ordinances of the Soviet government (the first socialist government in the world) was on the problem of improvement of the Russian language. The decree of the National Education Committee on 23 December 1917 concerning the application of a new spelling for the Russian language (after a proposal by the Academy of Scientific Research and long before 1917; the improvement of the Russian language was not realized during the reign of the Czars), was reinforced by a second decree issued by the National Committee on 10 October 1918.

A number of other socialist countries have also realized the improvement of their written language; Bulgaria (1945), and Czechoslovakia, Rumania (1954). The problem of the Chinese language is far more complicated and difficult, but the government of the People's Republic of China began to realize the simplification of the Chinese language a few years ago and they are studying a plan of definite improvement of writing by using Roman letters instead of Chinese characters.

It was not mere coincidence that in our country the Vietnamese Communists with their leader, President Ho, have shown a determination to improve the national written language and have decided to realize the elimination of a number of inadequate elements of our national written language.

In his first book written in Vietnamese, The Revolutionary Way (Duong Kach Menh), written in 1915, President Ho has applied to our national written language a radical and logical modification, for example: Kach Menh, Kan Kiem, Zung Kam, Ngien Kun, Chu Ngia, Fuc Tung, Doan The, etc. (Documents of Vietnam Museum of the Revolution). It is commonly known that throughout his later writing and up to the present time the same improved written language is used (use K instead of C, D instead of d, Z instead of D and Gi, F instead of Ph, eliminate H in Gh and Ngh).

This improved national written language was employed precisely in the revolutionary propaganda documents of the Vietnamese Marxists before the 1930's and in the secret publications of the Communist Party of Indo-China since the creation of the Party. In the summary of the Party Regulations published in 1930, it was written: Chu Ngia Kong San, Zai Kap, Dang Vien Zu Bi, Fan Dau (Communist Doctrine, Class, Probationary Member, Overthrow), etc., (Documents of the

Vietnam Revolutionary Museum.) Up to the present time, many revolutionary cadres used to write our language in the fore-mentioned manner because they found it more efficient. Some people have used a similar improved national written language in their own works (for example, Comrade Nguyen Xien has used Z instead of D, D instead of đ, J instead of Gi, F instead of Ph, eliminated K and only used C, and eliminated H in Gh and Ngh).

In 1943, in the general plan of the Vietnamese cultural development of the Communist Party of Indo China, the improvement of our national written language was raised as a task to be performed among the urgent tasks of the Marxist Humanists of Indo-China, and mainly the Marxist Humanists of Indo-China. (See Tien Phong, 1945, No. 1, Reprint). After the revolution of August, our people having the control of the Administration, the Central Committee of Popular Education, as we already know, began the study of improvement of the national written language. The Vietnam Patriotic Cultural Association had also prepared to present this problem for discussion at the First National Cultural Conference (1946), and also raised the problem in the magazine Tien Phong. In the middle of 1946, the Committee of Organization for the National Cultural Conference agreed with the Minister of National Education to improve our national language in a short time in order to create a modern civilization for our country. (See Tien Phong, 1946, No 9). It is a pity that the situation at that time (the nationwide resistance was about to begin) did not allow the First National Cultural Conference to meet (there was only an opening session, which closed at once because of the emergency situation). The Second National Cultural Conference that took place during the resistance period (1948) designated a sub-committee on linguistics and comrade Nguyen Lan, President of this sub-committee, presented to the Conference "A Few Propositions on the Improvement of our National Written Language" (See Nguyen Lan; "Several Proposals of the Modification of our National Written Language--Minutes of the Second National Cultural Conference (1948)). It is evident that this problem did not receive very extensive study because of the resistance, but nevertheless, considered a number of inefficient letters (use F instead of Ph; use Z instead of Gi; eliminate H in Gh and Ngh; eliminate K and Q and only use C). Also hyphenated words were eliminated and put together.

After peace was restored, the North was completely liberated, entered a new epoch of development of the socialist revolution, and thus the problem of our national written language was considered anew. Among the tasks to be undertaken

for the development of education, the humanities and science, the improvement of our national language, or in other words, the reorganization of syllables of our national written language, was also an urgent task (Nguyen Khanh Tuan: "Education in Our Country in the New Epoch of Development," Hoc Tap (1956) No 9). This is the reason why for the last few years many people have sent propositions for improvement of the national written language to the Ministry of National Education and the newspaper Nhan Dan. (For details of these propositions see: Hoang Phe: "Rapid Survey of the Recent Ideas on the Problem of Improvement of Our National Written Language," Nghien Cuu Van Hoc (1960), No. 6).

Some people have also raised this problem in the newspapers, e.g., Comrade Hong Giao, in a review of research on history, literature and geography (see Hong Giao: "A Few Ideas on Contemporary Vietnamese," Nghien Cuu Van Su Dia (1957) No 26.) The very striking fact is that recently, as they could not wait any longer, many people have realized some necessary improvement in the national written language is needed. In the works of translation "Su That" [The Truth], F instead of Ph has been used but still cautiously (as in writing Fo-re-de-rich Ang-ghen).

In a number of issues of the publication Nhan Dan at the beginning of this year, in a series of articles written by Comrade Tran Luc, F was used instead of Ph, Z instead of D and Gi (As the writing: Fong Trao Zai Fong, Zan, Toc) (See T.L. : Con ma da-let va thay cung ai-co, (Nhan Dan, 15 January 1960.) At the beginning of this year also, the Committee of Pure Science, under the Public Scientific Committee considering the translation of a scientific vocabulary as an extremely urgent task to be performed in a short period of time, has proposed the use of the letters F, J, W. Z (for D) to create some more syllables like Bra, Cla, Psa, Ce, Ci, Cy (read Xe, Xi), Al, Ad, Es, Oz, Yl, etc., and to suppress the hyphen for combining words (as in the writing of aldehyd, glucose, hypebol, etc.). This problem is being discussed avidly among the "natural scientists".

After raising the problem of our national written language (See Nghien Cuu Van Hoc, 1960, No 5), Nghien Cuu Van Hoc has already received quite a number of letters supporting the idea of the improvement of our national written language and contributing many concrete ideas. (We are not quoting here these propositions, which are generally very detailed). It is obvious that the problem of the improvement of our national written language has received wide attention; for the present century this is a subject in our tasks of linguistics, which has received the most attention

and the most discussion among a large number of controversial subjects. It is a problem which receives the attention of all of the people of our nation. This is why, despite the present partitioning of our country, not only the North discusses improving our national written language, but in the South the linguistic specialists cannot ignore this problem.

For example, Nguyen Dinh Hao, representative of South Vietnam to the Congress of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Burmese Research Association in 1960, chose the problem of the improvement of our national written language (naming the problem of standardization of Vietnamese spelling) as his contribution to the congress. (See Hoang Phe's article relating to the proposition on the improvement of our national written language by Nguyen Ding Hoa.)

In short, the improvement of our national written language has long been a subject for the attention of our Party, President Ho and all the people of our country. The inconvenience of our situation is the only reason that up to the present time we have not realized the improvement of our national written language.

The improvement of our national written language is an urgent need because of the requirements for the development of Vietnamese. After the August Revolution the Vietnamese language has acquired its rightful place as a unified language of an independent people. Today Vietnamese is being taught and used in every school from elementary school through universities. It is in a period of strong development and absolutely requires deep unification and standardization. The improvement of our national written language will provide a sane development of the Vietnamese language and will help in the standardization of the language in many respects. The improvement of our national written language not only creates suitable conditions for the standardization and for the unification of the spelling and for the unification of the principles of phonetic translation, but also provides suitable conditions for the standardization of phonetic to the development of vocabulary (a problem of addition of new syllables), to intensify the study of syntax in Vietnamese (to realize the use of combination words). The improvement of our national written language is an urgent need today considering the demands in education, culture and science. On our way towards socialism, the task of national education and scientific development, we find that day after day this task becomes more important. The improvement of our national written language would provide the development of an improvement in teaching culture and science. Our national written language, once improved, will become more adequate and simpler

and will therefore provide more facility and rapidity in reading and more convenience in expression when written for our people. Therefore, this will facilitate the learning of the language by the people. After improvement, the national written language with the addition of the number of necessary syllables will be an official tool in the promotion and development of science. In our task of science, the first task to be undertaken is the compiling of a scientific glossary. Our national written language must be improved gradually to avoid an unfavorable influence on the above mentioned subject.

The improvement of our national written language is an urgent need also because of the requirement of promotion and development of education and culture in the regions of our ethnic minorities. A very important task to be performed is to create a written language for the ethnic minorities. The people in our country, Vietnamese and ethnic minorities, form a strong solidarity which is unified in every aspect of civil rights, politically, economically and morally. This is why the creation of the written language for our ethnic minorities must be based upon our national written language; on the other hand, illogical parts must be avoided and the newly-conceived national written language should not include the illogical aspects of our present national written language which emanated from the Roman alphabet, and which was due to a special historical situation.

The task of creating a written language for our ethnic minorities is progressing step by step but its urgent character demands the improvement of our national written language if we want to avoid further complications. This is why a good improvement of our national written language would greatly help in the creation of a written language for our ethnic minorities. On the other hand, Vietnamese is not only the language of the Vietnamese people (Kinh) but also is the popular language of the ethnic minorities of our country. Our national written language, more adequate and simpler after improvement, will facilitate the study of Vietnamese by ethnic minorities.

Of course, the temporary partition of our country is quite an obstacle in the improvement of our national written language. Our country from South to North is one, our people are one, our speaking is one, for the Vietnamese language is always one and our national written language must be one and can only be one. This is why the improvement of our national written language must be the common task of all people in our country. Unfortunately, the Ngo Dinh Diem clique has sold the south of our country at a cheap

price to the American imperialists and do not give a damn bit of respect to our people's language so that attention is paid to our national written language! Furthermore, they prevent free circulation and normal relations between the two parts of Vietnam, and evidently create difficulties to forbid our people in the South, the intellectual patriots who love their own people's language and the linguists from the South, to participate in wide discussion and to solve the problem of our national written language, which is very vital to the development of the common language of our people and to the culture of our country. For a long time improvement of our national written language has already been demanded by all the people of our country. History has relegated to us in the North the responsibility of solving this problem. It is certain that our people in the South would support us with enthusiasm if we improve the national written language adequately and suitably. Our people in the South will trust the people's government of the North.

Furthermore, the improvement of our national written language will bring other interests; although secondary, they are not negligible. Our national written language will be simpler after improvement, and therefore will annually assure an economy of a quite large amount of stationery and printing materials. It will not only be in the thousands, tens of thousands, but millions of volumes and hundreds of thousands of sheets of paper. The economy realized will not be small. Finally, after its improvement, our national written language will be more adequate and therefore will provide more facility to our friends in foreign countries to study Vietnamese. (The importance of our position in the world will mean an increasing number of foreigners studying Vietnamese).

In summary, the improvement of our national written language is precisely a demand of our present revolution. We must solve the problem of our national written language quickly in order to create suitable conditions for the development of our language and our culture. An early solution is advised, the sooner the better, for the later it becomes the more complicated and the more difficult the problem will be. On the strong impetus of development in the North, our humanist and scientific tasks are making strides and are preparing the way for more advances. We are preparing quickly the realization of translation and analysis of scientific glossaries; we are starting to translate the complete works of Marxist-Leninist doctrine (e.g., Das Kapital, Complete Works of Lenin); we are preparing to translate the

famous masterpieces of the world; from now on we will be compiling a Vietnamese dictionary. It is commonly admitted that it is better to improve our national written language in order to perform the above-mentioned tasks. It is a necessity; this is the very moment to improve our national written language; there can no longer be any further delay.

## II. A Few Problems of Precepts and Principles in Attaining Good Improvement

According to our experience, we have found the importance of defining a number of very clear precepts and principles.

What are the precepts to be followed for the improvement of our national written language?

We believe that the first precept is: The Improvement of our national written language must aim at rationalization, simplicity, and a completion of the study of syllables. In other words, the improvement of our national written language must be more scientific, more convenient than the present one and more convenient for daily use as well as for other studies. To be scientific without accomplishing convenience is not acceptable; but, to be convenient without being scientific is not advisable. This is to say, we cannot demand an absolute scientific character or a totally convenient character. It must be done in such a way that our people not only study our national written language easily, but also use it conveniently.

There is a big problem: At what level should improvement take place? Is it advisable to improve (or to modify) in an absolute way? It must be recognized that our present national written language is, despite its defects, relatively rational and fundamentally useful, has been for almost a century and especially for the last two decades. It has served our people efficiently for the last few decades, our revolution, and the culture and the education of our country. This is why it is only advisable to have the problem of improvement based upon our present national written language.

Furthermore, because of a special situation, we must exercise much care in the improvement of our national written language. Being aware that our people have just escaped from illiteracy, the improvement of our national written language must avoid unnecessary radical changes so that anyone who has just learned how to read and to write will not be encumbered and will not have to put forth additional effort to relearn and so that old publications will still be usable for some time to come.



Our country is temporarily divided; the improvement of our national written language should also take into account the half of our people who are in the South and who should be protected from a disadvantage in reading our publications from the North. We must bear in mind that our people have the only the only unique national written language and the hope of our people is to give it a meaningful improvement. Therefore, we should realize a number of improvements and at the same time we should make an effort to unify the language throughout the country.

Finally, we must recognize that the improvement of our national written language is being performed when we are doing research on contemporary Vietnamese, especially on phonetics and a number of characteristic linguistics that is the first step and which includes several problems not extensively investigated. It is evidently so because linguistics is a new science for us that up to the present time has been neglected for lack of opportunity to organize a scientific study of our language. Particularly, the improvement of our national written language has been discussed widely since the last century, but in fact, the majority of studies have been a matter of sentiment rather than on real scientific foundation. It is the same today that in many situations our studies have lacked certainty and have not yet had a reliable scientific foundation.

There are irrational aspects of our national written language which are familiar to us, but in many cases it is a fairly complex problem and requires intensive work to know how to analyze and to modify them rationally. From experience we know that many people have proposed to eliminate a certain number of irrational aspects of our national written language, but this was only replaced by a number of other irrational substitutions. To improve our national written language in this way actually makes it more complicated. This is why in the first phase of the improvement of our national written language it is advisable to make only minimal modifications that have been thoroughly studied and found to be certain and rational. When it is not absolutely necessary, or thoroughly studied, we must continue our research and keep the traditional form temporarily. Later on, according to the opportunities that present themselves, we will progressively realize a number of other improvements.

Language is continually changing and therefore the problem of improvement of the written language once in a while must be reconsidered after each historical period, and cannot be solved once and for all. After the October Revolution of 1917-18, the Soviet government realized the

improvement of the Russian language; but all the former irrational aspects of Russian have not been eliminated. We are obliged to be more cautious because of our present situation. The idea to realize at once "radical modification" to make our national written language entirely rational is not realistic and suitable to the situation of our country and to the demands of our people. The best thing would be to form the improvement of our national written language step by step with caution, certainty, and previous research and preparation.

Are the above limitations confining us too much, leaving us not daring to make radical improvements? We do not believe so. To be cautious, to be certain, does not mean that we do not dare to be radical. On the contrary, we must realize a radical improvement that must be clear, necessary, and rational. The clearly necessary and rational improvement will certainly be approved by the majority, not only the intellectuals, not only the linguists, but also the working class--not only the people in the North, but the people of the whole country. There is no reason why we should hesitate to realize such improvements.

In short, the improvement of our national written language must follow this outline: To be based upon the present national written language and to perform the improvement step by step, radically, cautiously, surely, and each step must prepare the way for the next step in order to make it coherent, simple and adequate. To realize the above-mentioned precepts a few problems must be defined in order to have a number of very clear principles.

1. The relationship between our national written language and the Vietnamese language:

This is the relationship between the written and the spoken language. The written language uses symbols to express and cannot exist independently of the spoken language; the development of the spoken language requires a suitable development of the written language. "A system of written language is rational if it meets the characteristics of the spoken language and if it has received adequate improvement during its evolution." (Soviet Encyclopedia, Chapter "Written Language").

Therefore, for the improvement of our national written language in particular, as well as in general (including the additional problems of unification of spelling throughout Vietnam and the institution of phonetic translations of foreign words into the language) our first task is to make a thorough study of the characteristics of the Vietnam language and especially the syntax. To be more

precise, it must be based upon a study of contemporary Vietnamese with its characteristics, syntax and phonetics; for the improvement of our national written language is precisely to make it suitable for the contemporary Vietnamese and from there to contribute to the development of contemporary Vietnamese.

This is why we have to answer this question continuously: Is our national written language suited to the characteristics of Vietnamese, especially contemporary Vietnamese?

What are those characteristics? A very deep study of all characteristics is impossible for lack of opportunity, even if it were only a matter of the main characteristics of Vietnamese. This problem is huge and complicated. Anyway, we must concentrate our attention on resolving satisfactorily the problem of a few main characteristics of Vietnamese.

We think that there is a very striking characteristic of Vietnamese which precisely differentiates it from Indo-European languages, i.e., in Vietnamese there is no formal structure as in Russian or in French for example. That is to say, in Vietnamese there is no way to construct a word out of several parts: root, affixation (prefix, suffix), desinence (tentative translations of French, "racine", "affixe", "prefixe", "suffixe", and of Russian "flexiya." The latter is often stated in French as "desinence." Desinence is the modifying part, often located at the end of a word and expresses the order or the number of the verb, etc.).

In other words, there is no way to express a nuance by a slight change in a word (this is why word order is very important in Vietnamese syntax). Unlike the Indo-European languages, Vietnamese is a typical uninflected language (while waiting for a more suitable rendition, this is tentative translation of French word "langue" "flexionelle" and "langue isolante."). In the past when our country was still a French possession, some of our intellectuals, who had received training in the schools of the imperialist countries, had compared Vietnamese with French or English and concluded consciously or unconsciously that Vietnamese is unsophisticated because it has no flexibility. This is a completely erroneous viewpoint.

Every language has its own characteristics. Characteristics of the Vietnamese language must be deeply investigated in order to suitably resolve the various problems of our language including the improvement of our national written language. For example, we must bear in

mind the inflexibility of the Vietnamese language as a characteristic when we define the basic principle of spelling in our national written language, or when we study the problem of combining words. This is precisely what Nguyen Xuan Quang did--not respect these characteristics--in his proposition of combining words: chua biet (chuabiet), di dau (didau), sap cuoi (sapcuoi), neu chang ra tay (neuchangra-tay), etc., without considering that chua, dau, sap, neu, chang in Vietnamese are separate words which help to clarify, connective words which are not and cannot be affixations and therefore less qualified to be called desinence.

Phonetically, Vietnamese has a number of characteristics that are unlike many Indo-European languages. The intonation is an extremely important problem Vietnamese. The formation of sound is not simple and is very unlike the sound formation in many other languages (a double vowel and the problem of the ending consonant, etc.), therefore, even the concept of phoneme is also a problem to be investigated in order to find a suitable application in Vietnamese. In addition, rhythm is also a very important problem in Vietnamese because it is used to create nuances (examples: nghi and nghĩ, day and đây, mười and mười, người and người have a different meaning in each case.) These problems have not been thoroughly investigated as yet, but they are precisely the problems that require our special attention for the improvement of our national written language.

2. The problem of the basic principles of spelling our national written language.

The basic principle of spelling in our national written language today are the principles of phonetics. This is the most rational principle of spelling with regard to the writing of Vietnamese. It can be said that to improve our national written language precisely is to find an absolute application of the principles of phonetics; because the irrational or the complicated cases of our national written language mainly are the circumstances in which the principle of phonetics have not been consistently applied.

Theoretically, the principle of phonetics can be absolutely applied in the spelling of our national written language because of characteristic inflexibility of Vietnamese. In the flexible language (like the Indo-European languages) the problem is rather more complicated, because in this case most of the time it is not required that the writing must faithfully reflect the sounds of words, but it requires the reflexion of the formal unit of a word without accounting for the possible variations of sounds. In Russian,

there is not only "golová" (read go-la-va) but also, "golovy" (read go-la-vu), "golov" (read ga-lof) this is why it is always written "golova", although it is pronounced gólava (but not golova). In French, there are not only "grand," but also "grande" and "grandir"; not only "ils vont," but also, "ils ont." This is why "grand" is written with letter d and "ils" with letter s. That is to say, Russian and French, in addition to the principle of phonetics, do have a principle of morphology. The morphology principle of spelling is not suitable to our national written language. Lately, while compiling a glossary of scientific terms some people believed it was advisable to write i-od (i-ot) as a reminder that i-od is the root of words like i-o-dua. This is a tentative way to introduce the morphology principle of spelling in our national written language and it is very inadvisable.

In short, the basic principle of spelling of our national written language must be only the principle of phonetics. The improvement of our national written language must be based upon the study of contemporary Vietnamese phonetics first, and it must be done so that our national written language correctly and rationally reflects contemporary Vietnamese.

In this respect, the written language is not required to be entirely scientific, meaning it must exactly reflect the sounds in contemporary Vietnamese and every unit of sound. Such a written language is not necessary. We need a rational and convenient written language for the use of all the people. That is to say, it is not necessary to reflect every unit of sound or the variation of sound, even those variations of sound that are not necessary or do not even play a role in the modification of meaning (for example, the vowel, U, Ū, etc., in Vietnamese can be pronounced a little bit longer or shorter without affecting the meaning of the word). Only phonemes are to be specified, or in other words, the basic phonetic unit forms the pronunciation of Vietnamese. It is precisely because of the lack of attention to this point that some time ago Ngo Quand Chao contradicted himself when he raised the principle of "not to dream about finding a system of sound transcription in which every syllable satisfies the law of harmony," but in concrete terms proposed the use of "ū" and "ũ", etc., (to write the vowels ū and ũ when they are shorter) and to write ũng (ung), ũc (uc), ũn (un), ũt (ut). This is not necessary at present and it is rather complicated to do so because in contemporary Vietnamese, there is no distinction between u and ũ, ư and ử, as between a and ă (in an and ăn).

Because we cannot demand an absolute rationale, then in a number of circumstances if the irrational is not very obvious, and does not need to be modified yet, it is possible and advisable to retain the usual writing, the traditional writing that has always been. It must be done to avoid the excessive discussion that is not really necessary. Later on, when the necessity arises a number of traditional ways of writing can be investigated and modified. This is because the written language has lagged behind the spoken language. This is why there is no language in the world, except the recently created ones, that has no definite traditional writing. Of course, our national written language does not have many instances of traditional writing, unlike English and French, in which the traditional writing has become the basic principle of spelling.

In a few written languages like French the principle of etymological spelling is still applied: This principle requires the reflection of etymology on the written language, requires a reflection of the etymology of words which are borrowed from Latin or Greek and which means that they must be written according to the Latin and Greek basis: in French "homme" (Latin: homo), "tant" (Latin: tantum), and "temps" (Latin: tempus); written with ph (Read F), th (read T), Ch (read K), Y (read I); words of Greek origin like philosop~~hie~~, rythme, technique, etc. The principle of etymology is a principle of spelling which has complicated French very much. It is completely different with the principle of phonetics.

Recently while compiling the glossary of scientific vocabulary it was proposed to write aldehyd and hypebol in order to conserve the international nature of these words. We think we should not regret this international nature of the word and omit to respect the basic principle of spelling of our national written language which is the principle of phonetics, and to add a new principle of etymology entirely unnecessary. Of course, we are not talking about the circumstances of truly international writing in a few scientific and technological branches that we have to use, like in any other country. In this case, we write in the international way what we can always read in the Vietnamese way and it does not need to be dependent on the pronunciation of any other language. For example, "sin" (sine) we write "sin"; we should not read "xin," but we should read "sin" in order to respect the basic principle of spelling of our national written language which is the principle of phonetics.

3. The problem of standardized pronunciation in Vietnamese:

Our national written language is a literal transcription of the sounds. The basic principle of spelling of our national written language is the principle of phonetics. To improve our national written language, one problem must first be solved, that is, the problem of definition of a standardized pronunciation of contemporary Vietnamese. The problem has to be considered because the pronunciation of Vietnamese is different in the South from the North. Which one should be chosen as the standard? All proposed improvements (modernization) of our national written language, up to the present time, have omitted this subject, and therefore, no resolution has been made.

The core of the problem is to standardize the pronunciation of Vietnamese, and this is a very great problem. This is one aspect of the need for unification and standardization of Vietnamese. To define a standardized pronunciation of Vietnamese is to have a foundation for the improvement of our national written language and the unification of the spelling.

A few years ago the review Nghien Cuu Van-Su-Dia [Arts, History and Geography Research Studies] attempted to study this problem. The first one to raise this question was presumably Comrade Andreyev (See M.D. Andreyev: "The Problem of Vulgarization of the Pronunciation of the Vietnamese Language," Arts, History, and Geography Research Studies, 1956, No. 18. Obviously, it was not vulgarization, but standardization; presumably, the author means "normalizatsiya" which is "standardization," and the translator from Russian to Vietnamese made a mistake in saying "vulgarization").

Comrade Andreyev presented a number of principles in choosing the standardized pronunciation of Vietnamese:

1. The principle of easy understanding (that is to say, possibly many people will follow it);
2. The principle of the least possible number of homonyms.

3. The principle of progress (e.g., suitable to the common development of Vietnamese).

4. The principle of the pronunciation in the capital city (Hanoi).

5. The principle of constituents: [Whether] pronunciation in the capital city [or] pronunciation in various regions, the written language has enough foundation to supply a standardized pronunciation (concretely, if the pronunciation of the capital and the pronunciation of various regions are in contradiction, the one which identifies with the written language will be chosen as standard).

Comrade Nguyen Lan and Comrade Hong Giao have contributed

a few ideas (see Nguyen Lan: "Open Letter to Prof. M.D. Andreyev, USSR, on the Unification of Pronunciation in Vietnamese," Arts, History, and Geography Research Studies, 1956, No. 19 and Hong Giao: "A Few Opinions on Vietnamese Today," Arts, History, Geography Research Studies, 1957, No 26). Comrade Nguyen Lan maintains that it is not advisable to choose the pronunciation in Hanoi as a standard, but it is advisable to choose the "differentiated" pronunciation based upon our national written language (as the regional pronunciation which distinguishes "d" and "gi" is chosen). Inversely, Comrade Hong Giao thinks it is necessary to have a basic principle, i.e., adopt the pronunciation of a certain region as the foundation of standardized Vietnamese (this is the Northern pronunciation) and to adopt the pronunciation of the capital city of the country, Hanoi, as the standardized pronunciation of Vietnamese because up to the present time, and for a long historical period, Hanoi has been continually the center of political, cultural, and economic progress of the whole country.

We think the solution of the problem of definition of the standardized pronunciation of Vietnamese must be based upon a number of common principles on the one hand and on the other hand on the real situation of our country and our language in order to obtain adequate resolution. According to the development of language, when defining the standardization of the language, the pronunciation of the most prosperous, political, cultural and social center of a country is commonly chosen, and this center is usually the capital city. Formerly, the pronunciation of Moscow was chosen for Russian; the pronunciation of Paris for French, and the pronunciation of Peking for Chinese.

Our Vietnamese language is also subject to this law of linguistics. It is clearly known to our people that Hanoi is the undisputed political, social and cultural center of Vietnam. The pronunciation of Hanoi in a few circumstances is not only in contradiction to the pronunciation of more than half of our country, but also is in contradiction to the written language: the pronunciation of Hanoi does not distinguish "ch" and "tr," "x" and "s," "d" and "r". In a few regions of the North, and all over the Center and the South, the distinction is quite clear and so is our national written language.

In this respect we find that the written language has a reciprocal effect on the spoken language: Precisely because there is a distinction between "ch" and "tr," "x" and "s", "d" and "r", therefore our common goal is to bring about more agreement about the distinctions in pronunciation, like in the Center and in the South, also including the people



from Hanoi. Even in Hanoi itself we have heard daily many people pronouncing distinctively "ch" and "tr," "x" and "s", "d" and "r". Therefore to standardize the pronunciation of Vietnamese, the best way would be to adopt the pronunciation of Hanoi as the basic foundation (excepting cases mentioned above when the pronunciation of Hanoi does not make a distinction and more than half the country does) and complete it by instituting the pronunciation which prevails in the greater part of the country. Our national written language also makes these distinctions. Such a resolution is the most rational because it is suitable to the needs of the majority of our people.

In this respect, "d" and "gi" is a special subject. A long time ago, they were clearly two consonants, but for quite some time these two consonants have evolved into something closer and resulted in the fact that there is no longer a distinction in pronunciation between "d" and "gi" in contemporary Vietnamese. If there is still a distinction it only concerns a few small regions of little significance in the Center, but there still is a distinction between "d" and "gi", and therefore, some of the time we have to keep an artificial demarcation in pronunciation (as in a few schools on the elementary levels during reading sessions). Actually, we should not go against the obvious direction of the development of the language and we must rely on the forementioned principles in defining standardized Vietnamese, that it is unnecessary and inadvisable to distinguish "d" and "gi". We can say that this lack of distinction is also suitable to meet the demands of the large majority of our people.

Some people worry that the lack of distinction between "d" and "gi" will deprive the Vietnamese phonetic system of one consonant and will increase the number of homonyms, hence decreasing the clarity of the language. Sometimes we think that anyway there has always been a distinction up to the present and now, if there is no longer such a distinction, it seems we are losing something regrettable. Do we have to fear that the lack of distinction between "d" and "gi" would impoverish the phonetic system of Vietnamese? But in fact, the phonetic system of contemporary Vietnamese is very abundant in comparison with many other languages. The phonetic system of contemporary Vietnamese consists of twenty two phoneme consonants, more than ten vowel phonemes and six rhythms. While the phonetic system of contemporary Chinese consists of only twenty one phoneme consonants, six vowel phonemes and four rhythms, the phonetic system of Vietnamese consists of eight final consonants m-p, n-t, nh-ch,

ng-k; in the phonetic system of Chinese there are only two, n, ng. The number of sounds in contemporary Vietnamese is more than four or five times the number of sounds in Chinese. Who would dare say, however, that Chinese is limited? The richness of a language depends upon the richness of the vocabulary (but not upon the number of phonemes and the number of sounds) and more rigorously upon the richness of life and of the culture.

The Chinese people have chosen the pronunciation of Peking as the standard of contemporary Chinese despite the fact that the pronunciation of Peking does not make any distinction among three couplets of words, namely "tiên âm" and "doãn âm". That is to say, there is no distinction between 賤 and 見, 千 and 牽, 緋 and 縣, when

many regions in the country, including a few regions in the North (the language of the Northern region is the basis of literary Chinese), have really distinctive pronunciation (our Sino-Vietnamese language does have distinction: tien and kien, thien and khien, tuyen and huyen). The new phonetic transcription (with Roman block letters) of Chinese, therefore, cannot make a distinction between tiên and kiên (written as jian) thiên and khiên (both written as qian) and tuyền and huyền (both written as xian). In doing so, the Chinese people have conformed to the linguistic law of language development in Chinese.

Language is a social phenomenon; in language the old usages disappear gradually, and the new progressively appears and develops. We think that on the one hand we must support the sane innovations, and on the other hand, it is not advisable to regret the desuetude and stubbornly preserve the desuetudes for obviously it is not possible to retain the distinction between "d" and "gi" when our people, who have been practicing the language for at least one hundred years, are not willing to keep it and to make a distinction between "d" and "gi".

Would it be a large increase of homonyms if there is no distinction between "d" and "gi", and therefore, would the language lack clarity? This is a valuable observation. We have investigated and taken in to account about 70 couplets of homonyms with "d" and "gi": (bed). However, the basic unit of a language is not letters or sounds, but words, and such words are not independent but are situated in sentences.

This is why no confusion can be made between da (skin), and gia (family, to participate in) da, (stomach, yes) and gia (straw), dam (dare) and giam (supervisor, manager, director),

dau (trace, mark) and giau (to hide), di (maternal aunt) and gi (what), do (dirty, soil) and gio (raise), duc (education) and giuc (to rush), du (aggressive, naughty) giu (to care for), duong (as if), giuong (bed), etc. There is confusion only in a few rare cases; for instance: danh (economy, saving) gianh (challenge, competition) in a sentence like toi, (danh) or (gianh) (cho, anh)... But in fact we do not usually say it like this, but: tôi để danh cho anh..., and: tôi gianh lại, gianh lay, giành, đốc cho anh..., and therefore there cannot be any confusion really.

In practice, the distinction between da (skin) and gia (family, to participate in) in our language today is unnecessary, just as it is unnecessary to have a distinction in pronouncing or in writing of a as interjection with a pronounced with the tongue, closed a, and a dua (snobbishness), without accounting that we still have a as a unit of area (are), a-xit (acid), a-mip (amoeba) a-xe-ti-len (acetylene), a-pa-tit (apatite), and in addition to a-di-da-phat we have a-men. Similarly, there is no need to make a distinction for the pronunciation or the writing of ba (3) and bon (3 and 4) and ba (father, papa) in ba ma (father and mother), ba ba (river turtle), ba hoa (aimless conversation), bon ba (activity abroad), ba dao (restless, stormy).

Furthermore, if ever the distinction between d and gi could make a distinction between da and gia then how can we distinguish gia sach (price of the book) from gia sach (book shelf) because gia in both cases is written with gi? Or, how can we make a distinction between an do (half through eating) and an do (eating with a poor appetite) when do in both cases is written with d? If letters or syllables are taken separately the homonymy would often occur unavoidably.

We would wonder: If this is so, why worry about the distinction between s and x, tr and ch? The problem of d and gi and the problem of s and x, tr and ch are completely different from one another. We think that it is advisable to make a distinction between s and x, tr and ch, and the main reason is not that the language would be lacking clarity without such distinction. Really, the population of Hanoi would misunderstand each other in their conversations when they omit these distinctions between s and x, tr and ch. The reason we find it necessary to distinguish s and x, tr and ch is because at least 17 or 18 million Vietnamese among more than 25 million do make such distinctions in daily conversation. As to d and gi, although we have not made concrete investigations, it is certain that the number of people who do pronounce them distinctively are only a few ten thousands, or at the maximum one hundred thousand. Really it is not easy to find someone in Hanoi and other big cities, who naturally pronounce distinctively d and gi.

At the present time the distinction between d and gi can be qualified as artificial. That is to say, it no longer survives (in a general survey) in the actual practice of our language. D or gi? This question has made many students miserable in their spelling; this question has made the worker and peasant miserable in his studies and often has made the intellectuals, the writers and even the linguists miserable. When Tumo wrote "Giong nuoc nguoc" (The Upcurrent), when Tran Thanh Mai wrote "Trong giong song vi" (Looking at the River V), and Tu Ngoc (Nguyen Lan) wrote "Nguoc Dong" people wondered. Write dong or giong, d or gi. (See Tu Ngoc: "Dong Hay Giong", Tao dan, 1939 No. 6).

Recently, in a similar way many people still worried about the name of our first movie film, "Chung Mot Dong Song" or "Chung Mot Giong Song"? (The Common River) and for a long time a striking feature is that in the publications of the North as well as the South it seems there is no objection to writing dong to (storm, tempest) day noi (telephone) trau doi (to improve), or giong to, giay noi, trau gioi.

In turning the pages of a book of selected classical works for grade 5, recently published by the Ministry of National Education (1960), we found the following footnote for spelling: "day thung, day phut, day thep (usual writing: giay phut, giay thep, giay thung):--rope, second and minute, iron or steel wire, and "dai ao, dai thuong (possible writing: giai thuong)"--strap for clothing, reward, prize. All this bewilders the children and, in fact is not the mistake of the teacher or of the author of the book! This proves that the distinction between d and gi is no longer justifiable.

The basic principles of spelling of our national written language are phonetic principles. It is not possible to rely on popular pronunciation to define spelling well; the only solution is refer to old dictionaries. In the reference to old dictionaries it is often found written with d in some dictionaries, and with gi in others. The same word was written gim in the Vietnamese-Latin Taberd and Theurel, the Vietnamese-French dictionary of Genibrel, and in the Vietnamese-Chinese-French dictionary of Gustave Hue and it is written dim in the Vietnamese dictionary of Khai-Tri Tien-Duc and the new Vietnamese dictionary Thanh-Nghi; it is written dim in the dictionary of spelling of La-Vinh-Loi (Tu-Lam) in the North, and gim in the dictionary of spelling of Le-Ngoc-Tru in the South. We can quote many other similar examples.

It is not even reliable to refer to the old Vietnamese

language, Nom. Many words in our contemporary written language are written with d, but in the old Vietnamese language the phonetic transcription by Chiense is pronounced with d in the Sino-Vietnamese phonetics: for example, da (多) , doi (水), etc. But, with giot (giot nuoc, drop of water), gio (gio lon, pork leg), it is commonly written today with gi and in the old Vietnamese Nom after many dictionaries (like Genibrel's) it is written 交 (Chinese dot) and 跪 (Chinese do). That is to say, according to the above mentioned, it should be written dot, do. The diversity of the writing of old Vietnamese Nom has not even been taken into account. It is not exaggerated to say that more than half the difficulties of compiling a dictionary of spelling up to the present time are contained in the problem "d" or "gi"? This is why it is rational to forget the distinction between d and gi in pronunciation and even in the writing and it would be widely approved and agreed by the people of our whole country.

Recently, the Institute of Literature organized a discussion with a number of cadres fully experienced in popular education, and also a discussion with a number of teachers of grades 1, 2 and 3 in Hanoi. In those two discussions it was unanimously agreed to abandon the distinction between d and gi, for many people have acknowledged that this artificial distinction between d and gi only creates difficulties and complications for school children and for the people in their literary studies.

#### 4. The problem of symbols [diacritics]:

After the problem of standardization of Vietnamese we must solve the problem of the symbol in our national written language, e.g., the problem of choice and use of letters and auxiliary accents.

Of course we still use the Latin alphabet in the improvement of our national written language. The problem is how to use the Latin alphabet; is it advisable to modify the Latin alphabet and to augment with a number of new symbols? The greatest of our difficulties here is the limitation of the number of symbols in the Latin alphabet, which comprise the fewest number of phonemes, and the lack of a symbol in the Latin alphabet to express rhythm [tone]. The exclusive use of the Latin alphabet would not be suitable for the radical application of this principle: Each symbol represents a definite phoneme (or rhythm) and each phoneme (or rhythm) is illustrated by a definite symbol. But the use of many more new symbols would bring many inconveniences in practice. Therefore, we must compromise in the number of new symbols that we institute.

First, it is advisable to use the Latin alphabet in a more radical and rational way. In the Latin alphabet today there are a number of letters not yet used in our national written language: f, j, z, and w. For thorough use of the Latin alphabet it is advisable to adopt all of these letters in our national written language; in all allowable circumstances it is advisable to use these letters of the Latin alphabet that are commonly used in the written languages of various countries. For example, f, d, a, i in the written languages of various countries are used to illustrate the consonants ph, d and the vowels a, i, which are the existing phonemes in Vietnamese. Therefore, there is no reason we should not use f to write the consonant ph, d to write the consonant d, a and i to write the vowels a, i. But, there absolutely should not be dependence on the language of any definite country (for instance French), thereby limiting our use of the Latin alphabet. When necessary, no hesitation should take place in using a number of letters in a way not ordinarily used for these letters, especially when they illustrate special phonemes in Vietnamese.

If the thorough use of the Latin alphabet is not sufficient then we can possibly study the possibilities for a number of new letters or the modification of letters of the Latin alphabet or to borrow a number of letters from other alphabets. But that is talking about principle. Concerning practice in the first step of improvement it is not advisable to use new letters not yet in existence, or if they are invented, it is advisable to consider them as experimental and use must be very limited to avoid complication in current usage. To do so, at least in the present situation, we must temporarily use a number of double letters, but in a very limited way and the less the better, to illustrate all phonemes in Vietnamese. In opposition to the ideas of "Ay-mo-ni-e", we think that it is not advisable to use double letters to write the vowels in Vietnamese (e.g., aa, ee, ou...) because the vowel is the fundamental element of the syllable and in Vietnamese in addition to the single vowels there are double vowels. It is not rational to use double letters to write vowels because this may cause confusion and is cumbersome. It is only advisable to use double letters to write a number of consonants as they already exist in contemporary Vietnamese. Nevertheless it is advisable to avoid the use of double letters for frequently used consonants, e.g., the consonants that are used at the beginning as well as at the end of a word making our national written language more compact.

Vietnamese is a rhythmic language, and the rhythm in Vietnamese has a role in differentiating meaning or significance of basic phonetic units like phonemes. These characteristics of Vietnamese must also be illustrated in the written language by special symbols; to illustrate rhythm, our national written language must have its own symbols and accents. This is why we think that the accents huyen (low falling tones), sac (high rising tone), mang (low broken tone), hoi (low rising tone) nga (high broken tone) could be modified for greater clarity and, if necessary, their location be made consistent (for example, the accent could always be placed above the letter or be replaced by other symbols that can be adopted after study, for use with greater convenience). At any rate, special symbols must be used, which would be different from the letters, because they illustrate the phoneme power of consonants.

In our national written language, with the accents used to illustrate rhythm, the use of auxiliary accents to construct new words must be even more limited to avoid obscurity and confusion. For example, if it is possible, it is advisable to reduce or to simplify the auxiliary accent on letters (by using a number of new letters without auxiliary accents).

However, the problem of auxiliary accents (including intonation accents) is a complex problem and must be thoroughly studied. In the initial stage of improvement of our national written language, perhaps it is not generally advisable to raise this question.

##### 5. The problem of new syllables (problem of phonetic translation):

The improvement of our national written language must be accompanied by resolution of the problem of new syllables. This problem is raised because of the need for phonetic translation of scientific glossaries borrowed from other languages as well as phonetic translations of proper names and geographical names. For this reason, before solving the problem of new syllables it is believed that some principles should be defined for phonetic translation.

The phonetic translation is a translation based upon sound from a foreign language to Vietnamese. The goal here is to transfer foreign words into Vietnamese words, and it is different from the goal of phonetic transcription: phonetic transcription is the use of the national written language to illustrate the sound (the closer the better) and the pronunciation of a foreign word (for instance, in studies of foreign languages). Therefore, in phonetic translation the

main thing is to transform the foreign word into a Vietnamese word, i.e., to make a word in Vietnamese, acceptable in Vietnamese, pronunciation by the Vietnamese and easily usable. Hence, the characteristics of Vietnamese, the phonetic system in Vietnamese and the system of our national written language must be respected. To pronounce foreign languages faithfully we should not do harm to the phonetic system and the system of writing. In other words, the faithful pronunciation of the foreign language must be limited: this is allowable within the domain of Vietnamese phonetics and the spelling of our national written language.

For this reason, we must study a number of characteristics in Vietnamese. One very striking characteristic in Vietnamese is that polyphonic words are not commonly used in Vietnamese, therefore, in phonetic translations it is advisable to reduce the polyphonic words, if possible, and to leave only two or three syllables for each word.

In addition to the phonetic translation of scientific glossaries and scientific vocabularies, there is also the phonetic translation of proper names and geographical names. In this case the pronunciation of proper names and geographical names must be strictly respected (and therefore it is generally not advisable to reduce the number of syllables only for convenience), but on the other hand the phonetic system of Vietnamese and the system of our national written language must still be respected. Thus, we cannot expect a literal or rigid adherence to foreign pronunciation.

The phonemes, as the basic phonetic unit of the language (not syllables), must command our attention. This is why in phonetic translation of either proper names or geographical names only phoneme elements of the words are important, and not flexible sounds (this is the very difference between phonetic sounds and phonetic transcriptions). Recently, in phonetic translations--mainly the phonetic translation of proper names and geographical names--a number of people have had the tendency to adopt an exact phonetic transcription, i.e., to be entirely faithful to the foreign pronunciation. We think that this is not advisable (and indeed not attainable). For instance, Soviet (Xoviet) the Russians pronounce Xa-vi-et, but COBET is written with O in Russian because it is a phoneme O in Russian, but not phoneme A; this is why the phonetic translations in every country are Xoviet (or similar) but never, Xa-viet. This is why recent phonetic translations like: A-sto-rop-ski (O-sto-rop-ski), Mat-sco-va (mac-tu-khoa) are not satisfactory and not rational at all.

An example to illustrate the irrationality of phonetic translations like Mat-sco-va: some render МОСКВА as



mat-sco-va, but MOCKBM~~Y~~ (from MOCKBA) as mot-sca-vit-so and think it is a good phonetic translation. In fact this is not an exact phonetic rendition; this is why it has been written: "mot chiec may bay len thang Mot-sca-vit-so dang bay tren thanh pho Mat-sco-va", See Nhan Dan, 10-7-1960).

On the one hand we have to respect the phonetic system of Vietnamese and the system of our national language, but on the other hand we must also acknowledge one characteristic of contemporary Vietnamese, viz., that it is a very strong period of evolution. In this period of evolution Vietnamese can absorb a number of phonetic elements from other languages. The problem of new syllables in our national written language is becoming a practical need today. But the absorption of a number of phonetic elements is only a progressive evolution of the past and has no definite laws. This is why the problem of new syllables in our national written language must be based upon the basic foundation of phonetic studies in contemporary Vietnamese. The addition of new syllables must be cautious and limited to what is necessary.

The addition of new syllables must engender a number of new sounds. The structure of our national written language, with its basic principle of spelling and its rules of syllabic construction must be respected. A characteristic (also a very good point) of our national written language is that each syllable is commonly used to express a definite sound and each sound is often illustrated by a definite sound (excepting a small number which we will abandon for the improvement of our national written language). This is why the new syllables which have been added to our national written language must illustrate new sounds and it is not advisable to use them in replacing some syllables already existing in our national written language. When we already have the syllables xe, xi, for instance, it is not advisable to add the syllables ce, ci or cy to illustrate only the sounds xe, xi. In doing so, it is as if we are destroying the structure of our national written language.

At the same time, the phonetic system of Vietnamese concepts of syllable formation must be respected. The new sounds illustrated by new syllables should not be shocking to the Vietnamese people and it should not be in conflict with the phonetic system of the Vietnamese language in order to have progressive assimilation. It should also be composed of sounds which are easily distinguishable from the existing ones. This is why we think that it is not advisable to force the use of the new sounds such as ab, at, id, etc.

6. The problem of suppression of hyphenated words:

Suppression of the hyphenated word becomes more and more the need in the development of contemporary Vietnamese. From a logical point of view there is no reason for the existence of a hyphen in a single word. In the new phonetic system (with Latin alphabet) of Chinese, sounds could not be written separately but in words without hyphens, and as a matter of principle this problem is no longer under discussion. But, instead of writing Chungchia Mac-Lenin we write: Chu Nghia Mac—Lenin with a long hyphen and a regular hyphen which is complicated; to avoid complications some people write: Mac-Le nin which is not rational at all. In a period when language requires precision and exactitude the absence of the hyphen can change the meaning of a word and cause confusion. A few examples are: In physics and chemistry the concept of absolute zero (so hong that) could be confused with complex number (so khong that); or in zoology writing "dong vat co vu lon" could be confused with "vu lon," but not with the high class vertebrate. Writing in separate sounds and separate words, therefore, makes it impossible to use the hyphen with its own true value. The hyphen ought to be used to give words, which were formerly separate words (two or three), a different meaning; each individual word still keeps its former character (own meaning), for example, chunghia, Mac-Lenin, chunghia xahoi-sovanh, Nam Vietnam. But up to the present time, we have commonly used the hyphen in proper names, geographical names or in the phonetic translation of words and new words.

The suppression of the hyphen poses two problems to be solved:

1. When to combine two words, when not to combine, and when to hyphenate.
2. How to avoid confusion in reading when words are written in combination.

At present the problem of words in Vietnamese has not been thoroughly studied. This is the greatest difficulty for writing words together. To write words together requires a limiting rule for words in Vietnamese: what is a word and what is not a word, and what is less and what is more than a word. But in doing so, should we wait until we finish the study of the problem of Vietnamese words before writing words together? We do not think so. Of course we have to advance the study of linguistics and especially the problem of words in Vietnamese. This task is extremely important and can provide the rule for writing words together. But seeking perfection is not advisable. In the first stages it is advisable to set rules for writing words together under circumstances

that there is adequate clarity. As to the cases that are not clear enough, we will have to carry on further studies. Cases already solved are not negligible.

The realization of the first stages of writing words together could strongly stimulate the study of the word problem in Vietnamese (when writing words together, the people would progressively acquire a clearer concept and therefore would participate in the study of this problem). Thus, it would be easier to solve the cases that still remain unclear.

Would it not be logical enough, while waiting for further studies, to write some words together sometimes and separately at other times? We think this is an excessive step, [but necessary during the] transitional period when we pass from writing words separately to writing words together.

The writing of words together will be confusing at times. In fact, this is not as great a difficulty as it is believed. In practice, the review Nhan Dan has printed words very close together and many times these are completely joined (to save paper and not intended for writing of words together and, therefore, words are printed together without meaning one word). No one, however, has complained about being unable to read it, but it is advisable that rules be defined for reading words written together after study of characteristic sound formation in Vietnamese to make for less confusion. As for a number of confusing cases, the use of special symbols to illustrate pronunciation will be advantageous if it is necessary.

### III. Methods and Procedures

The improvement of our national written language is a great problem. How to realize it?

There are two big steps: The first step is to study methods for improvement; the second step is to apply such methods to the dissemination of the improved national written language.

We think it is advisable to create a committee under the direct leadership of the National Scientific Committee to study methods of improvement of our national written language. The task of this committee is to study the principles of improvement of our national written language and rational methods. The program must include two parts: the improvement of the whole, or at least the general direction (because it has to proceed gradually), and the first step of improvement can be realized at once. During the studies it is advisable to publish the subject and to organize referendums because it is a very important problem which concerns

all the people, deserves their attention and everyone can offer ideas. We will greet and respect suggestions from our people in the South, from intellectual and linguists in the South, from our compatriots abroad and from our foreign friends.

After thorough study, the methods of improvement of our national written language must be presented for approbation by a scientific committee of national character and then presented to the government for approval and execution.

We must have a plan for dissemination of our improved national written language. To avoid encumbering the people it is advisable to use two written language, the former one and the improved one. For instance, our improved national written language will be used only in the titles of publications and some short articles (extensive works of long-term value could better use the improved national written language). On the front page of publications and on the book covers it is advisable to provide a reference between the old form and the improved national written language. Small books should be unpublished to explain progressively our improved national written language in a concise and understandable form. After a relatively short time (we are not aiming confuse all of our national written language) we could limit the use of the former national written language until it is completely abandoned, in order to unify the use of our improved national written language in all publications as well as in all official documents, etc.

Of course only the improved national written language will be taught in all the schools. The improved national written language being more rational then the former one will be easier and faster to learn. The primers and a number of classical books for the grade one, especially for the lower forms, must be re-edited. Temporarily a number of old books could still be used in the higher forms because the school children in those forms can easily learn both written languages. The old books will be gradually replaced by new ones.

After the improvement of our national written language it is also important to study the problem of the standardization of spelling (including standardization rules for phonetic translation of words borrowed from foreign languages) to compile a dictionary of spelling. Concurrently it is advisable to study the standardization of pronunciation (this problem can be studied during the study of our national written language) and to disseminate the standardized pronunciation. In this task such services as the radio, movies, theater, records, etc., should be used. In schools

the standardized pronunciation must be taught; in grade 1 we must have standardized pronunciation of Vietnamese. Except for the lower forms, spelling hours become practically unimportant. When the school children use the exact pronunciation, they will write our national written language correctly because the basic principle of spelling of our national written language is a phonetic principle.

Along with the improvement of our national written language we will also realize the standardization of spelling and pronunciation and will therefore create favorable conditions for a strong development of Vietnamese according to the needs of our people and of our present revolution.

## II. P O L I T I C A L

### PEOPLE'S COUNCILS ARE THE STATE'S LEGAL ORGANS IN LOCAL REGIONS

[Following is a translation of an article by  
Ngo Du in Nhan Dan, Hanoi, No. 2421, 4 Novem-  
ber 1960, page 4.]

In 1959, after all the northern regions completed the elections of the people's councils and the executive committees of all levels, the organization of political power everywhere was basically strengthened and fortified. After a year of activity, the people's councils have begun to substantialize the missions of the State as legal organs in the local regions. In the different zones, cities and provinces, the role of the people's councils is gradually attaining order. Through examination at their periodic meetings, the people's councils in a number of regions have checked the fulfillment of decisions made in previous meetings and have evaluated different situations. They expose good and bad points of each case while executing programs of new missions.

The People's Council in the Viet-Bac Autonomous Zone has discussed and determined the standards of construction plans and of agricultural and cultural developments. In Hanoi, Ha Dong, Hai Duong, etc., many representatives of the people's councils have observed and criticized the work of the executive committee. In many of the villages, such as Yen Tien (Nam Dinh) and Duc Thang (Hung Yen), etc., the people's councils have had substantial decisions on the direction and time taken to establish cooperatives, to encourage production, to buy food, and to construct schools. These decisions, which agree with the hopes of the masses and with local conditions, are enthusiastically welcomed by everyone; they contribute greatly to the substantialization of State plans. After each meeting of the people's councils in the provinces of Hai Duong, Hung Yen, etc., representatives of the people's councils are appointed to return to cooperatives, the decisions made by the people's councils to the people and to move the latter to work for the realization of these decisions.

The training of people's councils representatives and cooperatives executive members has been given attention and is up-to-date. From June 1959 to July 1960, the provinces

have trained more than 7,000 executive members and 17,000 people's councils representatives. The people who have received this training can see clearer than before the nature and responsibility of political power and the division of labor and responsibility of the people's councils representatives and cooperative executive members. Their work and methods of working have thus been much advanced.

However, at present, the people's councils in many regions still have a number of shortcomings that deserve attention:

In a number of regions, for example, the people's councils do not meet regularly according to established legal regulations. Moreover, they do not yet act according to their nature as State legal organs in local regions. In Hanoi, for example, not until the past fifth month production and development of cooperative agricultural production had been popularized and had reached the villages did the people's council touch on these subjects. One phenomenon of the shortcomings is that representatives are a type who either do not attend meetings of the people's councils or attend them only as a matter of form. In Hai Duong and Thanh Hoa provinces, meetings of the people's councils have been twice postponed because too few cadre representatives came to the meetings. In some places, cars had to be supplied before representatives would come to the meetings. Another phenomenon is still the problem that people do not yet listen attentively to ideas of the representatives, believing that the latter are not political cadres.

On the other hand, there is still a great number of representatives who rely too much on the executive committee. At cooperative meetings, the time taken to read reports is usually longer than discussion periods. Contents of meetings are sometimes too simply prepared; many times, representatives do not have prepared documents. Many representatives of the people's councils do not yet report the work of the people's councils or popularize decisions made by the latter to voters, therefore they cannot receive ideas and the people's wishes in order to reflect them to the executive committee. Moreover, the people's councils do not ordinarily appoint an investigating committee, in order to check on the executive committee and the different departments which execute the procedures, and to examine policies of the higher order and the decisions of the people's councils. In many places, like in the city of Hanoi, there is not yet an executive member who would be in charge of checking the activity of the people's councils. Until today, only 3 provinces in the mountainous regions are opening classes to train representatives of the people's councils; however, in the plain

region and in such provinces as Ha Dong, Nghe An and Vinh Linh, there are no training classes yet for the cooperative's executive members.

The mentioned short points have limited to a certain extent the strength of the political power.

An important reason for the above shortcomings is that the understanding of the roles of the people's councils, specifically speaking, and the roles of the political power, generally speaking, by the cadres, representatives of the people's councils and the people is still below standard. At the past meeting of the political powers of all the northern region which was organized by the Department of Interior, 10 provinces and cities like Hung Yen and Bac Ninh, Ha Noi, etc., did not send enough executive members to participate in the meeting as summoned by the Department. Some members did not call for meetings of the people's councils, some do not even know the contents of most of these meetings. Some representatives went as far as believing that the people's councils is not an important organization. Among the masses, many people do not yet see the roles of the people's councils.

Another reason for the existence of the shortcomings of the people's councils is that many of the people's councils representatives are not helped or trained properly to the political standard or to know the ways of working, etc., thus they are still confused in their missions. Representatives who live in the same unit for example, do not yet have a friendly relation with one another, thus to help one another in the substantialization of their mission.

To strengthen to reasonable standards, the State organs in the local regions, Party members and the political power must determine to quickly overcome all false understandings about the State, to absorb the State's Marxist-Leninist points of views. The People's Democratic State is an important means of the revolution to construct a new society.

On the foundation of accurate concepts about the State the roles of the People's Councils must be made those of the State's legal organs in the local regions as ruled by the Constitution. We must reorientate the livelihood in the People's Councils according to its nature, we must develop the democratic spirit and the spirit of responsibility of the representatives, we must continue to train representatives on their division of labor and responsibility, on methods of working, finally we must continue to reaffirm relations between representatives and voters and between the people's councils and the executive committee.

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## EDUCATE THE PEOPLE FOR SOCIALISM

[Following is a translation of an article by Van Trong in Nhan Dan, Hanoi, No. 2432, 15 November 1960, page 4.]

At a meeting of Party cadres of the Education Department, where the decisions of the Third Party Congress were studied, the representatives discussed many problems, among them problems concerning the Party's policy and program in education. Following is the outline of a few ideas discussed by a number of representatives on a subject that aroused warm enthusiasm at the meeting. The subject was: "The Responsibility and Purpose of Education."

### Three Main Missions of Education

Education in the transitional period, the period of advance toward socialism, is composed of three distinct missions: the education of the young generation, the training of cadres, and the unceasing development of the cultural level of the working class.

The importance and urgent nature of these missions were recognized by all members at the meeting. The young generation includes children, teen-agers, and young people, who constitute the greatest force. These are the ones who need to receive for a lengthy period an education in schools, before they are capable of engaging in actual production and construction. This clearly indicates that the teaching of this generation is in the long run an important responsibility of education. Comrade K., representative from Nghe-An, reminded the meeting of the hope which our Party has in this young generation and the responsibility of the Education Department regarding it as follows:

At the Third Party Congress, Chairman Ho, in receiving the youth who had come to celebrate the Congress, had encouraged them to "work harder in order to be socialists of the future," and "to be able in the future to build up the happiest and most beautiful society, that is, the communist society". The new people, whom we have the responsibility of educating, are the people of the new production force, living

under new production relationships.

Other representatives also expressed their special concern toward the education of the young generation. At this meeting, I listened to many enthusiastic discussions on the responsibility of the schools in educating the young people who will serve the present and future construction of our Fatherland.

Some comrades said: "While many of the rural children have never seen automobiles or trains, we must think of a way to teach these children to become the workers who will operate engines and control the automatic production lines.

Representatives at the meeting not only thought of the young generation in our present school system, but they also thought of the training of cadres for the State's First Five-Year Plan, of the responsibility to fight for the development of the cultural level of the working class. We should next listen to the words of comrade H., representative from Hai-Duong, who spoke of the things that our villages demand of the education departments.

To know when to sow, according to the right weather, is to be able to avoid rains and storms; to understand about bacteria is to be able to make good fertilizers. Content of lessons planned to develop the culture of the working class must help them to understand the above principles in order to be effective. Production in rural areas is developing; this demands from farm workers a good level of technology. Do we lack books on technology? No. In Thanh-mien, for example, there is a big closet of books in which there are many on technology. However everyone is still reading The Three Kingdoms. Why? Because there is no culture and therefore there is not enough understanding of technology.

Comrade Th., representative from the North, emphasized the heavy and special responsibility of the mission of education in advancing the mountainous region towards socialism, as follows:

In Ha-Giang region, 90% of the people from 12 to 40 are still illiterate. The Party requests that the mountainous region moves faster to follow the advancement of the plain region, and together with the plain region attain socialism. In order to catch the faster one, the follower must use a higher speed. However, speaking of education in the mountainous region, our speed of teaching here is slower than that of the plain region. In order to solve this contradiction, we must push stronger the mission of education in the mountainous region, that is, to speed it up, positively educating for the mountainous region many people who will construct socialism.

## The Problem of the Working Man

The responsibility of education having been discussed the meeting entered into discussions on the purpose of education.

The working man who masters his country, who has socialist consciousness, culture and technology, health and balanced development--as the political report at the meeting of the Third Party Congress clearly indicated--is the model of man in the socialist system. Our society has the responsibility of developing such a man; this is an extremely important responsibility and we must start with children from three years of age to adult status.

The above ideas from comrade C. of the cadres training center, are also ideas held by the majority of the representatives. But what kind of working man is this new and well-balanced and developed being? Many questions arise giving rise to rich ideas, such as how can one educate such a man within the education of system of our schools, the area of labor-production in the training of such a being, the relation between the service demanded by our society and the serving capacity, etc..

Some comrades said: In a number of our present schools, the new students are only intellectuals who know little of labor, who still despise the labor-production of workers and farmers. These students, after graduation, will not have the capacity to participate in labor-production; they will not yet understand actual production, and therefore will not be workers in the true sense of the word. Other comrades said: Our present school system, generally speaking, is somewhat advanced in combining theory and practice, but on different levels; therefore as theory advances, practice becomes less possible, thus it does not yet answer revolutionary requirements.

A few observations on teachers presented an important phenomenon: a great number of our present school teachers--including the popular and college level teachers--only pay attention to development of student cultural and scientific knowledge. To be good teachers, however, they forgot that this is only one phase of education--though it is an important one--in our whole system of education for which teachers must be responsible. One comrade from college spoke distinctly of the escape from actual living and actual production which still exist in many teachers and students, as follows:

To try hard to enrich scientific knowledge is not only a good deed but it is also an important one. However, to have the tendency to enclose oneself in the four walls of a

laboratory to search for high ideas, to invent "supremacy" in order to invest the most cultural ideas, but not wishing to participate in labor-production with workers, or to study and search with the masses, this is not the right direction to educate the working man according to our opinion. We must destroy the belief that labor practice only helps us to understand a little more about labor or to acquaint ourselves with production. Our society needs actual workers who produce material goods; education must create actual workers.

After being unified on different and basic points of views about the working man, the majority of representatives agreed that the working man whom the Education Department has the responsibility to educate is a man who has been trained to have prepared ideas, knowledge and technical skill, to be able to participate in all forms of labor, most important labor-production. On 8 November 1960, comrade Ha Huy Giap, member of the Party Central Committee and Secretary of the Party Education Department, in closing the meeting, expressed more concern on the above point.

Our comrade said: The mission of education is an important mission of the proletarian dictatorship. This is a great and complicated mission in which we must cooperate with the masses to study and practise it, and then practise and study it again. The decision of the Third Party Congress is the light which opens the way for the Education Department to recognize its own direction and responsibility. In society, the most fundamental labor is production-labor. Production-labor is the high accomplishment of intellectual education, moral education, physical education, aesthetic education, technology and ideology. The worker, whom our schools have the responsibility to educate, is the man with balanced development, who combines firmly handicraft labor with intellectual labor. He is a man who is superior in all aspects, who has all capacities to participate in the production of material goods for society. In short, this is the model of the working man that socialism demands our schools create.

Being the first meeting of the Education Department in studying the decisions of the Third Party Congress, past meetings of Party cadres of the Education Department had presented only a few ideas about the problems of education in the light of the decisions of the Third Party Congress. Nevertheless, it is certain that the ideas presented will help the people involved in the educational mission to think of their responsibility in relation to the revolutionary course of our country. "The human being is the most precious being." We educate the people for socialism; the more efficiently we accomplish this task the better will it be in both quantity and quality, for the realization of the victory of socialism.

### III. E C O N O M I C

#### PUSH THE IMPROVEMENT OF TECHNO-ECONOMIC AND TECHNICAL STANDARDS

[Following is a translation of an article by  
Le Thanh Nghi in Nhan Dan, Hanoi, No 2401,  
15 October 1960, page 3.]

(The Development and Establishment of Techno-Economic and Technical Standards are Urgent Demands for the Accomplishment of the Three-Year Plan and Preparation for the Five-Year Plan.)

Since the northern part of our country has entered the transitional period toward socialism, in accordance with the basic laws of the socialist economy, the economy of the north is gradually advancing toward a well-planned development.

Planning our country's economy, especially that of a socialist economy, has an extremely important relation with the development of socialist production, the construction of socialism and the endless improvement of the people's living standards. To realize socialist planning, we must thoroughly study and use all means to make use of accomplishments in technology and science--both inside and outside of the country--in order to guarantee prompt advances in technology in all branches of the people's economy, and in order to ceaselessly develop production processes and labor efficiency.

However, planning is but the first step of the planning task; to mobilize the masses to participate in the struggle to accomplish planned goals, and to surpass planned goals, is one of the most important conditions in accelerating the developmental speed of the people's economy. There is no planning which can anticipate the potential capacities of enterprises or construction; those capacities and advanced standards only reveal themselves in the course of the people's labor development. By the people's labor enthusiasm and their creative spirit, these capacities are developed and so are advanced standards, in order to replace old standards which have become backward. Lenin has called the State plan "the second program of the Party". He thus said: "In every

cooperative and construction, the program will be restudied and improved every day; in order to become more perfect, it will be in constant change."

Consequently, our Party and Government take very seriously the undertaking of leadership, the management of technology and the management of all enterprises in national construction and of other basic construction; these are foundations which occupy a highly important position in the people's economic planning. From the past to the present, the Party and the Government have always reminded the different departments and the different classes to strengthen leadership, to use all means in order to continuously develop the creative capacities of the people and cadres, to put into effect all existing capacities of machinery and favorable conditions in order to substantialize the motto of "producing promptly, in great quantity and in a good and inexpensive manner."

Under the leadership of the Party and the Government, management improvement in enterprises in 1959 has had a new influence on all enterprises and construction. It has fortified socialist production relations in all national enterprises and construction establishment; it has forced the working people to improve their leading roles in enterprises and construction; it has strengthened their revolutionary enthusiasm and their class consciousness.

The movement has further strengthened Party leadership and has thus rendered more perfect the socialist management system in enterprises and construction. On the basis of strengthening labor management and regulations, the workers' competitive movements have developed with greater zeal, resulting in the development of ideas in the solution of difficult problems existing in production and construction. Thanks to this, the State Three-Year Plan has been provided with conditions for a complete victory. For example, many important targets are to be fulfilled and overfulfilled. Many production units have completed plans before the planned dates.

However, the movement for management improvement in enterprises in 1959 was only the first step in improving the ideological and political standards of the people, of government employees and cadres. Moreover, it is but the first step in strengthening the ideological and political leadership and in advancing to a certain extent the management of enterprises and construction. Because of the limits of time and understanding, this movement has not as yet solved the problem of economic and technical leadership. At the present time, in a number of enterprises and construction, economic and technical management is still neglected; leading cadres have not taken this undertaking seriously and therefore have

have not yet actively participated.

Many comrades in Party committees, either enterprise directors or construction directors, only lead the people in political and organizational aspects. They do not pay great attention to the problem of leadership in economic and technological management; they seem to consider, for example, the improvement of techno-economic and technical standards as only the responsibility of technical cadres. In certain places, however, Party commissioners and directors of enterprises and construction wish to secure techno-economic leadership firmly but are still meeting confusion. Thus in many regions, the political undertaking and the techno-economic undertaking are still divided.

To secure ideological and political leadership and to make politics a leading function and the center of affairs are the basic principles of the management system in socialist enterprises. However, to obtain the above aims, we must not pay attention to just politics, but we must also use it to develop leadership in the techno-economic areas. Political cadres must study and penetrate deeply into the fields of economics and technology to secure the essential weapons which serve political aims and guarantee the victorious fulfillment of the political mission.

In order to secure economic and technical management in enterprises and construction, we must depend on techno-economic and technical standards. Only when we rely on the substantialization of techno-economic and technical standards can we lead well in all production and construction aspects of enterprises and construction, can we then encourage the people's competitive movements, to give the latter a realistic meaning, to have a scientific foundation for determination of plans and to direct the accomplishment of these plans; also by thus doing, we can further encourage labor efficiency, protect the quality of goods, lower market prices, and materialize to the best the economic budgeting system. In short, only when techno-economic and technical standards are well materialized will the following mottos be fully realized: "to produce promptly, in great quantity, to make materials good and inexpensive" and "to construct socialism diligently."

In the past, in enterprises and construction, we have had a number of techno-economic and technical standards which served as the basis for management and realization of State plans and the economic budgeting system. The realization of these standards has brought beautiful results in the economization of labor, raw materials and materials, and in the improvement of labor efficiency. However, generally speaking, the establishment of techno-economic and technical

standards and the management of fulfilling these standards in the different departments and production and construction units are still quite inadequate.

The task of urging production and construction to complete and surpass the planned goals of the Three-Year Plan, that is, the task of impelling socialist construction in the North, of impelling socialist industrialization in the First Five-Year Plan, demands that we must strengthen further the management of a well-planned economy. But, first of all, we must strengthen the management of all national enterprises and basic construction establishments. Only by thus doing, will we be able to realize the following motto: "to distribute and utilize well labor and capital, to work hard to economize in all aspects, to fight to obtain the highest results with lowest expenditures," as outlined in the political report of the Party Central Committee at the Third Party Congress. The development and establishment of techno-economic and technical standards have become an urgent demand in all construction and enterprises...

What must we do to push the improvement of techno-economic and technical standards?

One problem of this movement is to make cadres and workers understand the deep meaning of the establishment of techno-economic and technical standards, that is, to make them see clearly that the realization of this movement will be beneficial to all concerning enterprises, the State, the people's and cadres' own lives. The task of establishing techno-economic and technical standards is, therefore, directly related to the production task; it is furthermore a useful weapon to push the improvement of labor efficiency and of the realization of economization.

The movement of competition in constructing the advanced unit and the advanced individual is of the same nature as the task of establishing techno-economic and technical standards. For both movements complement one another, encourage one another in their development. The firm coordination of these two movements will consequently guarantee an accomplishment which will surpass the planned goals of enterprises and construction plans. The realization to the best of the establishment of standards will make the construction of plans and the direction to realize these plans easy and convenient.

The establishment of techno-economic and technical standards in enterprises and construction should not be a difficult task to workers and cadres. Through practical experiences in the past, we all understand each machine, each link of the production chain, each task; moreover, we understand each and all demands pertaining to production techniques,



raw materials and material consummation, etc... Besides, being well organized, directed and developed in ideas at present, we must therefore be able to discover inadequacy and weaknesses, so as to be able to contribute many ideas in order to reform our techniques to conform with production, in order to raise labor efficiency and to economize in raw materials and materials. On this basis, we should be able to create many advanced standards. Actual facts from the cement factory in Haiphong, the tea factory in Phu-tho, and the beer factory in Hanoi have proved that workers have discovered and solved many important problems in technical management, which formerly could not be solved by technical cadres.

While developing and establishing techno-economic and technical standards, we must on the one hand rely on the average levels of advancements, overcome all conservative tendencies, that is, fear of difficult situations and therefore refusal to raise standards. On the other hand, we must be cautious of tendencies to set too high standards, that the people will not have enough conditions to follow. We must give workers basic knowledge on the production procedures and techniques, on construction in each organ, to give them security in production and construction techniques so that they can handle the established techno-economic and technical standards.

In order to reward the workers' labor and to encourage the increase in efficiency, in the economization of raw materials and materials, to raise the quality of products, leading cadres must pay attention to develop the functions of the systems of "salary-according-to-products", and of rewards, etc... At the same time, cadres must promote the spirit of socialist duty fulfillment to raise labor efficiency and to develop production.

All the above must be fulfilled under the firm direction of the Party. The Party leadership must be strengthened in order to be able to move the masses, to promote the movement toward a triumphant success. The Party committees in enterprises and construction must recognize the important goal of the establishment of techno-economic and technical standards. Each cadre and Party member must know thoroughly each program and motto of the Party; each must exert himself to realize the four-togethernesses: eat together, live together, work together and discuss together with co-workers and to actually mingle with the masses and to learn from the masses.

At the same time each of us must closely follow technical cadres and workers, to participate in their work in order to help them and learn from them, to unite leadership

firmly with the masses, and ideology with specialized technology. Labor must be clearly assigned to organizations of the masses; moreover, we must help labor unions to develop this movement, to educate the working people, and to help young workers to develop primary roles in their advanced study and to make use of the advanced standards. On the other hand, we must organize firm coordination between professional courses and technological courses in enterprises.

In addition to the problems discussed above, to enhance the establishment of standards, we must pay great attention to labor organization and the organization of techno-economic management. Techno-economic and technical standards can be best realized and developed depending on whether or not labor organization and techno-economic managing organization are well strengthened and fortified. In order to fortify labor organization, we must pay attention in constructing and strengthening the leadership of production organizations. The latter are the foundations for better management in enterprises and construction; they are moreover the starting points of the mass movement in enterprises and construction. Furthermore, in order to give the production organizations the conditions and the responsibility to carry out and to manage techno-economic and technical standards, we must construct and fortify them well.

As for professional and technical organizations, to strengthen them, to decide their responsibility, their division of labor and their methods of working, we must understand thoroughly the establishment of techno-economic and technical standards. We must build firm coordination between professional and technical tasks and the production movement of the working people. Only in this way, will professional and technical tasks be able to serve production in an effective way; at the same time they will be able to raise unceasingly the professional and technical levels of the above organizations.

The mission of completing the 1960 and the Three-Year Plan, to surpass the planned goals, and the preparation for the accomplishment of the First Five-Year Plan demand that we must victoriously accomplish the establishment of techno-economic and technical standards. We must transform the enthusiastic spirit of victory at the Third Party Congress into a strength to act on the substantialization and development of this mission in enterprises and construction to maintain this well-timed movement to its beautiful end.

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## THE CEASELESS ADVANCE OF AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT AND RURAL CONSTRUCTION

[Following is a translation of an article by  
Tran Huu Duc in Nhan Dan, No. 2426, Hanoi,  
9 November 1960, page 3.]

### Agriculture Is the Foundation of Industrial Development

As the political report of the Central Committee and the decision of the Party Congress clearly indicate, after the accomplishment of the Three-Year Plan of reforming and developing culture and economy, we will step into the work of the First Five-Year Plan. This is the change to undertake socialism as of central importance, starting on the first steps of constructing a material and technical foundation for socialism, at the same time continuing socialist reform, advancing the country's socialist industrialization, transforming our northern region from a divided and backward economical status into a genuine socialist economy with contemporary industry and agriculture, and with advanced culture and science. This is the great construction of our Party and of our people, which demands from us the determination to fight through suffering and difficulties to realize it.

In the process of building socialism, agriculture has an extremely important function because it is the foundation of the development of industry. Not only must we reform the rural economy from individual and scattered production into a collective socialist economy, but we must also transform the backward situation of the economy, which depends greatly on nature and where the efficiency and quantity of production is low, into a contemporary agriculture which is highly mechanized and which is well equipped with irrigation.

For only when agriculture has advanced to a collective state and is on a large and contemporary scale, can we on the one hand eliminate the causes of class exploitation and, on the other hand, develop the creative spirit and great strength of everyone to conquer nature, explore all rich resources, raise the efficiency and quantity of production--these are most important--thus satisfying the demands of the economy and of

the people. Moreover, we can also raise the living standards of the villagers, materially and culturally. Only when we reach these goals of reconstructing our agriculture and farms will we be able to answer to the needs of industrial development and continually improve the lives of the farmers, and realize socialist industrialization.

At present, we have basically accomplished the unification of all lower-level cooperatives, and on the basis of the successful cooperativization movement, we have advanced technology and production. Thanks to this we have improved the accumulation and incomes of cooperatives and have improved greatly the lives of cooperative members. The latter are great achievements that have created new and favorable conditions for the development of agriculture, improvement of the lives of farmers and of new rural construction.

However, speaking generally of production, our economy is still basically that of a backward agriculture. Thus, although the efficiency and quantity of production has been highly raised compared to that of older days, they are still low when compared to needs and to the capacity of agriculture. Moreover, though the struggle against calamities has been improved, the agricultural situation still depends greatly on nature, which has brought us many difficulties.

Concerning cooperatives, although the organization of cooperatives has been basically accomplished and the quality of the cooperation movement is improving each day, the majority of cooperatives is still low level and on a small-scale. Production conditions are lacking, capital accumulation is low, production implements and materials are still in short supply and rudimentary, and management-leadership is still confused.

Regarding the people's living standards, because production is still low and labor time still idle, production is not highly developed. Therefore, although living standards in the villages have been improved, compared to standards in the colonialist, imperialist and feudal regimes, according to present demands, however, living standards in many villages in many regions are still encountering difficulties. Therefore, the accomplishment of cooperativizing all lower-level cooperatives has been a great victory, a determining step in the improvement of production relations, which furthermore promotes our northern region to a more advanced socialist cooperation. This, however, is but the beginning of the long road to the final goal, and should not permit us to be satisfied. Having accomplished the building of socialism in the villages, we must continue to advance further; we must not waste any time in the advance or to retreat.

## Direction and Responsibilities in the Development and Reformation of Agriculture in the First Five-Year Plan

Not yet speaking of long-term goals in the First Five-Year Plan, the political report and the decision of the Party Congress have outlined the following great missions assigned to the agricultural branch and rural areas: To complete the reformation of production relations in agriculture, to complete the cooperativization of lower cooperatives, to expand lower cooperatives into higher ones, and to unite all higher small-scale cooperatives into larger cooperatives. In the cooperation movement, only when the lower-form cooperatives, which are semi-socialist but small-scale, are transformed into the higher-form cooperatives, which are completely socialist and large-scale, will there be the strength and capacity to gradually use semi-mechanized implements to realize mechanization, hydraulization and electrification, thus improving efficiency and incomes every day and accumulating more capital for the further development of production.

In addition to the agricultural production cooperatives, which are the people's collective economy, we must build large-scale State farms, which will be owned by the people and managed by the State. These will serve as the skeleton of the socialist agricultural economy in the villages, as well as the symbol of collective agriculture.

Cooperatives and State farms that are firmly united are the organs of the socialist agricultural system.

In production, on the basis of cooperatives and State farms that are better developed and fortified every day, agriculture must develop in an all-out way, be strong and stable, in order, on the one hand, to begin the solution of the food problem and material supplies to industry. And, on the other hand, exportation of agricultural products must be improved, especially special tropical products. Finally, the accumulation of capital, which is necessary for the advancement of the economy, and cooperative relations with fraternal countries must be expanded. At the same time, by encouraging the development of agriculture and improvement of income for cooperatives, we can improve the living standards of cooperative members every day, attaining the living standards of the rich middle farmers in the next five years.

## Problem of Organization

To guarantee an all-out, strong and stable advance of the cooperation movement and agricultural production, to comply with proposed requirements, we must "at the same time

strengthen the work of ideological education in the agricultural cooperatives, improve the work of management, improve labor organization and technology, utilize and popularize advanced and semi-mechanized implements and encourage irrigation work and land reform in order to improve production ...". The State farms, thanks to favorable conditions which permit them to use advanced technology and to materialize agricultural mechanization, must improve organization, business management, and must never stop to improve labor efficiency, yields of all agricultural crops, cattle breeding and develop their influence over cooperatives.

To undertake ideological education and improve technology, planning management, finance, and labor organization are complicated tasks, but they are important to the construction and development of the socialist economy in the villages. These tasks must expand from the lower to the higher and must comply to the level of cooperatives, cooperative members and cadres. At present, we have obtained initial success in these tasks, but we must still try to advance and improve further in order to comply with the organization of larger cooperatives every day and with the responsibilities of production development and construction which become heavier every day.

From being exploited to being proprietors, and from individual production--depending largely on nature and managing a few mau of land with rudimentary and few implements--to managing collective economic organizations on a large scale with calculated and well-planned businesses, both cadres and rural people cannot help but be confused in the beginning. They cannot help being influenced by the old ideas and habits of the old regime, while materializing the responsibilities of the new mission.

During this time, there are demands for the establishment of cooperatives and development of production. The latter demands the improvement of training of the rural cadres and people, making them ready for new technology and new responsibility so that they may give the best management to small scale cooperatives. But there is also a demand to broaden the people's education so that they may handle modern technology, manage larger scale agricultural enterprises and many-sided businesses, and control all phases of the villages' missions which are increasing day by day.

To transform farmers of individual labor to socialist labor, with not only high political consciousness, skillful management and technology, but with higher culture, is not an easy and simple problem. It is a difficult task which must be undertaken by cadres who have been carefully trained to

do so. Practical ~~past~~ experiences have proved that difficulties arise to encourage a development movement when production relations are newly changed, when production strength begins to develop and when the level of cadres and the people is still below the necessary standard of improvement.

In short, looking ahead and from a long term view, we have obtained great results in bringing villages to socialism. However, these are but first results; we must not underestimate these victories. On the other hand, we must not consider them to be sufficient or perfect and neglect existing problems, which results in taking lightly the greater responsibilities to be accomplished, the difficulties to be overcome.

To reach the goal of socialism, advance toward realization of mechanization, "chemicalization" and electrification, that is, to advance toward the realization of a modern agriculture, to advance toward better and happier lives, to obtain all these, we must proceed on realistic grounds, that is, we must organize cooperation and the agricultural production assigned to us. Basically speaking, after having accomplished the cooperativization of lower-level cooperatives, we must try to fortify cooperatives in all aspects according to instructions and decisions [previously] outlined and to make existing cooperatives stable and well-fortified organizations, both ideologically and professionally. We must prepare to raise these cooperatives to higher ones and on a larger scale. At the same time, we must rely on these cooperatives and on the basis of well developed organizations, expand competition to advance technology and develop production movement-consciousness in the people.

Each cooperative, based on its own practical conditions, must plan food production, over-all production plans for cultivation, breeding cattle, fishing, forestry, etc. Production and expenditure plans, and collective production plans and family production plans all must be properly planned according to appropriate labor. Each cooperative must find ways to increase crops, explore lands, develop secondary jobs, to start construction and utilize still available labor. The movement of working spirit among the cooperative members is of main importance, and proceeding from this, all difficulties, are to be solved and production and income increased.

Speaking particularly of rural labor, we must find ways to utilize labor appropriately. In each cooperative, especially those of the plain regions where there is more manpower and fewer rice fields, we must on the one hand be practical in calculating the work involved in production and construction and, on the other hand, calculate and distribute available labor appropriately. What is left of available

labor--and there is certainly much of it left--must be divided and used in State enterprises and construction that have firm management and organization. Some labor should be used in the construction of new agricultural production bases, using realistic plans, organization and leadership. All of this constitutes a great task which each cooperative must undertake, to calculate it well and realize it in the most positive and accurate way.

The cooperation of the majority of the people has been mobilized; this is the greatest force. Once this great force is guided and developed there is nothing impossible to undertake, that is, there would be nothing that could stop the agricultural movement from improvement and strong advance.

This is the time, however, to purge false considerations and ideas that once basic cooperation has been accomplished, everything is done. For these are ideas that mistake the cooperativization of lower-level cooperatives as the accomplishment of the whole task, or that the present situation of our farms and agriculture, of efficiency and quantity of production cannot be advanced any further, etc...

On the contrary, we must rely on decisions made by the Party to educate and broaden the masses' knowledge, to move the people to fight and overcome all suffering in order to change the conditions of the farms, to press the development of production and the improvement of living standards.

The problem finally brought forth is, first of all, that Party members and cadres must recognize the significance of all transformations of the mass movement in the villages at present. We must recognize the potential capacities of each cooperative and in each local region; we must make ourselves the models to teach others, and finally we must mobilize and organize the forces of the masses to substantialize all programs planned by the Party.